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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Toward A Theory Of Native Self-Government: Canada and Russia in Comparative Perspective

BY

Greg Poelzer ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Political Science

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 1996

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Greg Poelzer
6785 Simon Fraser Avenue
Prince George, B.C.
V2N 2N2

January 26 1996

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **TOWARD A THEORY OF NATIVE SELF-GOVERNMENT: CANADA AND RUSSIA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE** submitted by **GREGORY M. POELZER** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

Tom Pocklington
Professor T.C. Pocklington (Supervisor)

Gurston Dacks
Professor G. Dacks

David R Marples
Professor D.R. Marples

Gilsdorf
Associate Professor B. Gilsdorf

Professor K.S. Coates (External Examiner)

Fred Judson
Associate Professor F. Judson
(Chair/Examiner)

January 10, 1996

DEDICATION

To Anna, Gregory, and Max

ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of the efforts by indigenous peoples in Canada and Russia to become self-governing, with the intent of producing a theory which explains the origins and outcomes of the contemporary struggle for aboriginal self-government. It is argued that the struggle for self-government is a consequence of the social conflict between two disparate societies--indigenous and modern-state. Through an analysis of the sociopolitical histories of the aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia, the study argues that it is modern state building--not colonialism--that is the decisive historic factor which irrevocably shapes the political development of indigenous political communities, leading eventually to their quest for self-government. One of the most revealing findings of this study is that, despite the profound differences between Canada (liberal-democratic, capitalist) and Russia (authoritarian, state-socialist), the policies pursued by the state and the pattern of relations between the state and aboriginal peoples are strikingly similar.

The study makes three contributions to the scholarship on aboriginal politics: Theoretically, it advances a comprehensive explanation of the efforts by indigenous people to accomplish self-government--origins and outcomes. At present, such a theoretical account does not exist and is urgently needed. Methodologically, it presents a comparative study of aboriginal politics within two very different societies--a capitalist, liberal democracy (Canada) and a non-capitalist, authoritarian state (Russia). This study represents one of the first efforts to go beyond comparative studies among liberal democracies and, as a result, holds the promise of meaningfully contributing to our understanding of aboriginal politics.

Substantively, this study offers a comparative study of the views of aboriginal people in Canada and Russia. In addition to interviewing community elders and political elites, extensive interviews were conducted among "ordinary" community members in the Evenk settlement of Tyanya (Siberia) and in the Metis settlement of Gift Lake (Alberta) on issues related to their communities and self-government.

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INTRODUCTION
Overview of the Study

One of the most prominent political struggles of our time is the struggle for aboriginal self-government. Despite its importance, however, political scientists have failed, with a few notable exceptions, to make significant theoretical or empirical contributions to our understanding of the efforts by aboriginal people to accomplish self-government. To date, the vast majority of research on aboriginal issues has been conducted by anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and lawyers. Anthropologists have offered a wealth of information about indigenous cultures and cultural change; historians have carefully detailed the histories of aboriginal peoples from the initial contact with Europeans to the present day; sociologists have directed our attention to the contemporary social conditions and problems that confront indigenous peoples; and lawyers have spared no ink on the legal issues surrounding aboriginal rights and claims. Yet, political scientists can make valuable contributions to our understanding of aboriginal-state relations and, especially, self-government.

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of the efforts by indigenous peoples in Canada and Russia to become self-governing. The purpose of the study is to produce a theory which explains the origins and outcomes of the contemporary struggle for aboriginal self-government. It is argued that the struggle for self-government is a consequence of the social conflict between two disparate societies--indigenous and modern-state. An analysis of the sociopolitical histories of the aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia reveals that it is modern state building--not colonialism--that is the decisive historic factor which irrevocably shapes the political development of indigenous political communities, leading eventually to their quest for self-government. One of the most revealing findings of this study is that, despite the profound differences between Canada (liberal-democratic, capitalist) and Russia (authoritarian, state-socialist), the policies pursued by the state and the pattern of relations between the state and aboriginal peoples are strikingly similar.

The study hopes to make three contributions to the scholarship on aboriginal politics: *Theoretically*, it advances a comprehensive explanation of the efforts by indigenous people to accomplish self-government--origins and outcomes. At present, such a theoretical account does not exist and is urgently needed. *Methodologically*, it presents a comparative study of aboriginal politics within two very different societies--a capitalist, liberal democracy (Canada) and a non-capitalist, authoritarian state (Russia). This work represents one of the first efforts to go beyond comparative studies among liberal democracies and, as a result, holds the promise of meaningfully contributing to our understanding of aboriginal politics.

Substantively, this study offers a pioneering comparative study of the views of aboriginal people in Canada and Russia. In addition to interviewing community elders and political elites, extensive interviews were conducted among 'ordinary' community members in the Evenk settlement of Tyanya (Siberia) and in the Metis settlement of Gift Lake (Alberta) on issues related to their communities and self-government. (These two communities achieved self-government just recently: Gift Lake in 1990 and Tyanya in 1992.)

The analysis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One explains why the dominant theoretical (public policy, political economy, ethnic mobilization, and aboriginal government) and methodological (single case studies) approaches to the study of aboriginal politics are limited in their capacities to produce a theory of self-government. Alternative approaches, both theoretical and methodological, are considered in order to explain the origins and outcomes of the struggle for aboriginal self-government.

Chapter Two compares aboriginal political life in Canada and Russia at the time of contact, and argues that, notwithstanding the colossal impact of the colonization of the indigenous peoples of North America and Siberia, the fundamental nature of aboriginal political communities endured.

Chapter Three forms the cornerstone of the study: it explains the *origins* of the struggle for aboriginal self-government. First, it explains the universalizing political logic, and the organizational capacities to operationalize this logic, of the modern state. It then compares modern state-building in Canada and Russia. Through a comparative historical analysis, it is demonstrated that modern state-building is the decisive historic factor which irrevocably shapes the political development of aboriginal peoples. The modern state in Canada and Russia, unlike its respective colonial and absolutist predecessors, possesses a universalizing political logic which compels the state to attempt to destroy the ways of life of aboriginal peoples through the assimilation of indigenous peoples into the social and political fabric of the dominant society. The most notable legacy of the assimilation policies of the state in both Canada and Russia is the residential school system. At the same time, consistent with their federal logics, the state segregates aboriginal peoples from the dominant society onto Indian reserves in Canada and aboriginal soviets in Russia. The combination of these contradictory policies has led not to the intended assimilation and, thus, disappearance of indigenous peoples, but rather to the transformation of aboriginal political communities which are in quest of self-government. The political development of aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia is contrasted with that of aboriginal peoples in Norway and Japan, both unitary states, which pursued strictly assimilationist policies.

Chapter Four examines the *outcomes* of the struggle for aboriginal self-government. The chapter links the political transformation of aboriginal communities in Canada and Russia to their current organization and mobilization for self-government. Transformation of aboriginal communities has introduced state-like conceptions of territoriality and government into indigenous political communities, and has produced an educated aboriginal political elite and politicized aboriginal masses. It is also argued that the local community is the fundamental unit in the political life. Along with these *internal* factors, there are three *external* factors that are necessary to achieving self-government. First, a dissent permitting dominant society must exist if aboriginal peoples are to have the opportunity to organize and mobilize resources for their struggle. Second, constitutional reform, broadly understood, of the political institutions of the dominant society is a critical condition of opportunity for aboriginal peoples if they are to achieve greater self-determination. Third, international pressure on dominant societies is very important in forcing them to address the aspirations of indigenous political communities. An examination is provided of the accomplishments to date of the struggle for self-government. The aim is not to describe self-government agreements, but rather to give a theoretical explanation of their outcomes. Finally, Chapter Four contrasts Canada and Russia with Norway and Japan which are marked by the absence of struggles for self-government.

Chapter Five assesses the impact of modern state societies and, specifically, modern state building on the lives of real people living in real communities. This chapter analyzes the transformation of the Metis of Gift Lake and the Evenk of Tyanya as political communities. It begins with an examination of the social and political conditions of the Metis of Gift Lake and the Evenk of Tyanya on the eve of the creation of their respective settlements in the 1930s and, then, compares the political development of both settlements up until the period of active organization for self-government. Attention is focused on the political, social, and economic transformation of Metis and Evenk communities and on their struggles to achieve self-government.

Chapter Six compares Gift Lake and Tyanya as contemporary aboriginal political communities. This research is based on interviews with community members regarding their contemporary way of life and their views on the question of self-government. Critical to understanding aboriginal self-government is understanding 'ordinary' community members' political values and aspirations.

The study concludes with an explanation as to how the theoretical account advanced here contributes to an understanding of struggles for aboriginal self-determination in other parts of the world.

Finally, a word about terminology is warranted. Aboriginal, indigenous, native, and tribal are terms used widely throughout the scholarship on indigenous peoples. In Canada, the term First Nation is increasingly used as well. These terms are all used interchangeably in this study and refer to those non-state peoples, who possess(ed) egalitarian social and political organization based on kinship and who maintain(ed) non-industrial economies, based on reciprocity. Thus, this study excludes those "original" peoples throughout the world who possessed hierarchical social and political organization and economies based on centralized redistribution, at the time of European global expansion in the sixteenth century. The Sakha (Yakut) of Siberia are an example of an "original," but not "indigenous," people.

CHAPTER ONE
Theory and Methods

Despite the profound differences between the historical development of Canada and Soviet Russia, the policies pursued by the state toward indigenous peoples and their consequences for indigenous political development have been remarkably similar. Both countries segregated indigenous peoples onto separate territorial-administrative units (reserves in Canada and Native soviets in Russia), both countries banned traditional aboriginal practices such as sun dances and shamanism, and both countries established residential schools, among other measures, to transform aboriginal children into "civilized people." Yet, the attempts to completely incorporate indigenous peoples into Canadian and Russian society have not succeeded. In both countries, aboriginal peoples are engaged in struggles to seek greater political autonomy. How could the political histories of indigenous peoples in so very different countries as Soviet Russia and Canada have been so similar? How can we explain the origins and outcomes of the current struggles for aboriginal self-government in Canada and Russia?

Existing approaches to the study of Native politics cannot adequately answer these questions--alternative theories and methods are required. A significant part of the problem lies in the focus of research on aboriginal peoples, especially in Canada, but also in other Western, liberal democracies. Disproportionately, research has been concerned with constitutional and legal issues, whether this be the preoccupation with the "inherent right" to aboriginal self-government, some unsettled land claim, or the "aboriginal right" to sell fish. Insufficient attention has been given to the broader cultural or sociological foundations upon which current struggle for Native self-government in a number of countries is based.

In contrast to existing approaches, struggles for Native self-government should be analyzed as a *socio-political episode* (like social revolutions and modern state building), resulting from the particular course of aboriginal political development rooted in the political conflict between tribal and modern state societies. Moreover, comparative analysis of aboriginal communities is the most productive way to develop explanations of struggles for Native self-government which are at once historically grounded and can be generalized beyond the cases studied.

Current Approaches

At present, there is no theoretical account which explains the origins and outcomes of the struggle for aboriginal self-government. Nevertheless, over the past two decades, public policy, political economy, ethnic mobilization, and Native government approaches to the study of Native politics have emerged. These approaches have provided valuable insight into the politics of aboriginal peoples. But each is limited in its capacity to construct a comprehensive theory which explains the efforts by aboriginal peoples to accomplish self-government. Current research is also limited methodologically; to date, the vast majority of research on aboriginal politics consists of single country studies and lacks the theory generative insights that comparative research provides. Both the theoretical and methodological limitations are discussed below in order to prepare the background against which theoretical alternatives can later be presented.

Public Policy

The public policy approach (it goes without saying that this approach, as well as the others discussed here, are not monolithic, but have a plurality of streams within them) enjoys considerable support in the study of aboriginal politics, especially in Canada. The primary concern of the public policy approach, as its name suggests, is to understand the formation of public policy toward aboriginal people. Accordingly, it focuses on federal (national) and provincial (regional) government environments, as well as increasingly on aboriginal organizations in the shaping of aboriginal policy.

The utility of the public policy approach is readily apparent in the works of scholars such as Weaver, Dacks, Gibbins and Ponting, and Fleras and Elliott. Weaver's *The Making of Canadian Indian Policy* carefully examines the development of the 1969 White Paper, which if implemented, would have led to the termination of special rights for status Indians.[1] Gurston Dacks' timely edited volume focuses on the wide-ranging impact of the devolution of authority from the federal government to the territories.[2] Ponting and Gibbins' *Out of Irrelevance* examines the development of the roles of the Department of Indian Affairs and the National Indian Brotherhood as key actors in the shaping of Indian policy in Canada.[3] Finally, Fleras and Elliott's recent book seeks to understand aboriginal-state relations in Canada, New Zealand, and the United States.[4] While the public policy approach does not restrict itself to an examination of government actors, and does consider the consequences of government for aboriginal people, it nevertheless takes government policy as its analytical reference point. As Fleras and Elliot state, "Our sociological perspective focuses on relationships and intergroup dynamics within a framework of government policy and administration."[5]

Because the public policy approach is sensitive to changes in government environments, it is curious that most scholars who adopt this approach emphasize the *continuity* in public policy toward aboriginal people, especially, across the colonial and post-colonial period. For example, John Tobias contends that "[t]he principles of Canada's Indian policy were thus all established by the time of Confederation. What changed was the emphasis placed on the principles."[6] Tobias contends that government policy changed only its emphasis from the goal of protecting Indians to the goal of their enfranchisement. This is not a shift, but a break. This study will later show that modern states (Canada after Confederation; Russia after the 1917 Revolution) possess a universalizing political logic not shared by other types of states.

Another shortcoming of the public policy approach is that it studies the politics of aboriginal peoples from an intrasocietal perspective. This is made explicit in Fleras and Elliott's methodological statement in their recent book, *The Nations Within*: "The comparative method will guide our investigation of the 'nations within' and their relations with the larger society of *which they are a part*. The unit of analysis is the larger society."[7] Such a perspective is less than helpful for understanding the dynamics of aboriginal communities or the political values and aspirations of aboriginal peoples. Clearly the larger society is the most important external factor shaping the political development of aboriginal peoples. But, if we are to understand the efforts of aboriginal peoples to become self-governing, our explanatory unit of analysis needs to be aboriginal communities, not nation-states.

A final problem of the public policy approach, as it is practised currently, is its functionalist and liberal-modernizationist theoretical premises. Gibbins and Ponting, for example, explicitly develop a model of successful self-government based on the functional requisites of "legitimacy, social integration, political articulation, and political integration and consolidation."[8] These functionalist-modernizationist premises are also reflected in the work of Dacks: "Political development," he contends, "is the ability of the members of a society to make binding, legitimate decisions concerning their affairs."[9] But, how applicable are functionalist and modernizationist premises to aboriginal political communities? Functionalist explanations tend to be ahistorical, assuming *needs* that are requisite for the functioning of all societies. Functionalists maintain, for instance, that one *need* for all societies is government. However, a number of anthropologists have cogently argued that indigenous societies are societies without government. Functionalist explanations of political development should be rejected. Instead, it should be recognized that different societies, including aboriginal, possess their own historically conditioned logic of political development.

Political Economy

The political economy approach is distinct from the public policy in that the former takes economic factors as decisive in explaining the politics of aboriginal peoples. The political economy approach is not monolithic, but it does possess key paradigmatic elements that are shared by those who adopt it.

The political economy approach analyzes Native politics within a class-dependency framework, where Native communities are treated as internal colonies of the dominant society. In this core-periphery framework, the larger society, the core, accumulates surplus value from Native communities, the periphery. In his book, *Native Peoples in Canada* Frideres makes this clear: "[T]he macro-model here presents the Indian reserve as an internal colony that is exploited by the dominant White group in Canada. White Canadians are seen as the colonizing people while Natives are considered the colonized people."[10]

The political economy approach sees a strong pattern of continuity in the politics of Native peoples, starting from the landing of Columbus and continuing to the present day. The early colonization period, it is argued, has swept away indigenous pre-capitalist economies and has marginalized aboriginal people within the capitalist economy. Native politics, in short, has been transformed into class politics. Dunbar-Ortiz argues

> What is needed is an understanding of the fundamental politico-economic processes within the development of capitalist accumulation through colonial plunder, and, in particular, in the development of the imperial-based political economy of the US. It is more accurate and productive to view Indian resistance as a part of the international class struggle, which is inherently linked with national liberation during this era of imperialism.[11]

The transformation of Native politics has two implications: First, it means that aboriginal peoples are fundamentally part of the larger society. Second, it means that aboriginal politics is a question of haves and have nots. Both of the implications are evident in St. Onge's critique of those who study Native politics from an ethnic perspective:

> Such a paradigm [ethnic] moves critical analyzes away from class-based issues and obscures the capitalist process of differentiating society between the haves and the have nots. This process occurs not merely in the sense of capital versus working class, but also of capital versus marginalized, staple producing, reserve labour force: the *sub-class.*[12]

There are several serious problems with the political economy approach as it is now practised: *First,* and perhaps the most challenging critique, is expressed in the following question: if capitalism is the determinant cause of the problems of Native people, how do we explain the similar situation of Native people in Russia, where *non-capitalist* economic development took place?[13] *Second,* it is not clear how capitalism has succeeded in eliminating traditional, non-capitalist, economic activity, and incorporating Native people into the social division of labour. In many Native communities, hunting, fishing, and berry picking are still very significant economic activities. Moreover, unemployment rates, as high as ninety percent, do not indicate marginalization in the economy of the larger society--they indicate *non-participation. Third,* the internal colonialism model is demonstrably false: the dominant society spends billions of dollars in Indian programs and services, and, especially, on the bureaucracy administering these programs, but the revenue it extracts from Indian reserves is minimal. And, *fourth,* given the dependent position of aboriginal people in society, it is difficult to see how they could ever overcome their colonial status.

In this critique of the political economy approach, it is not being suggested that a cogent Marxian account of Native politics is not possible; to the contrary, the Marxian perspective, with its emphasis on social relations, has a lot to offer. However, to construct a political economy theory of Native self-government, it is necessary to reject the internal colonial model and to begin with the assumption that Native collectivities are non-capitalist social formations, fundamentally distinct from the societies that dominate them. In other words, a cogent Marxian analysis would examine aboriginal-dominant society relations as one between two different political economies and investigate how the interaction between the two political economies shapes politics in aboriginal communities. Currently, it is assumed that aboriginal communities are simply part of the dominant economy.

Ethnic Mobilization

The ethnic mobilization approach analyzes the politics of aboriginal people within a minority-majority group framework. The strengths of this approach are reflected in two seminal works: Cornell's *Return of the Native*, and Svensson's *Ethnicity and Mobilization in Sami Politics.* These works take aboriginal-state relations (Sweden for Svensson; the United Sates for Cornell) as their unit of analysis and examine how and under what conditions minority indigenous peoples can mobilize resources to affect their relative position within dominant societies.[14] Without question, a focus on resources and conditions is an indispensable *part* of any theory of Native self-government.

But the ethnic mobilization approach, too, has important shortcomings. First, in common with the public policy and political economy approaches the ethnic mobilization approach analyzes Native politics from an *intrasocietal* perspective. Commenting on the political obstacles faced by the Sami of Sweden, Svensson argues: "The Sami are a part of this society;

in interaction, they can only make use of statuses and institutions defined and controlled by the majority."[15] A consequence of a majority-minority analytical framework is that differences between ethnic groups (social, cultural, economic, and political) become marginal in importance. Second, despite the emphasis placed on historic phases, the ethnic mobilization approach underlines the *continuity* in aboriginal-state relations: although resources and opportunities of the partners change, the dance is still the same. Even in impressive historical works, such as Cornell's, this ahistorical theoretical bias shows through within the analysis of each phase of aboriginal-state relations. Third, and most significantly, because the emphasis is on minority-majority relations, for the ethnic mobilization approach, Native self-government, in and of itself, is not a subject of theoretical interest. Rather, the theoretical interest is explaining the variations in Native political mobilization. For all of these reasons, the ethnic mobilization approach is inadequate for explaining struggles for aboriginal self-government.

Native Government

The Native government approach is the most recent contribution to the study of Native politics. In contrast to the three previous approaches, it casts its focus on aboriginal political communities and takes seriously aboriginal people as knowledgeable political actors.

Because of this focus, the Native government approach has provided powerful empirical insights into the politics of aboriginal people and their communities; this is its strength. In their book, *Indian Government: Its Meaning In Practice*, Cassidy and Bish (based on research visits to nineteen Indian bands across Canada) examine the governance of Indian peoples at the local level.[16] Much of their work focuses on questions such as the production and provisions of services (e.g. education, social services, and health care) by Indian governments to Indian people. In a recent article, Long focuses on the element of traditional Blood and Peigan political cultures that have endured and that must be addressed in the construction of self-governing polities.[17] To date, however, Pocklington's book on the politics of Alberta Metis Settlements stands out in the insights into the politics of Native people that it has provided.[18] Because his research is based primarily on interviews and surveys of Metis political elites and Metis settlers, it has provided the richest insights into the political life of Native communities and is reflected in the intimate knowledge that he is able to educe.

The weakness of the Native government approach, thus far, is that it is not theory driven. The theoretical limitations of these works are readily acknowledged by their authors. Regarding his own book, for example, Pocklington states: "Of necessity, this book undertakes to explore terrain rather than answer a question."[19] In the same vein, Cassidy and Bish caution readers not to make generalizations about Native governments beyond the cases studied.

Even though it is not theory driven, the Native government approach does hold critical assumptions. In particular, it assumes strong continuity in the politics of Native peoples. In regard to the quest for Metis self-determination in Alberta, for instance, Pocklington writes:

> It must be emphasized that the importance attached to land and political rights within the Alberta Metis settlements ... is by no means a break with earlier Metis history. On the contrary, it is but another step in a continuing tradition.[20]

Cassidy and Bish see the same historical continuity in the government of Indian communities: "Indian peoples enjoyed self-government long before Europeans arrived in the land."[21] The contemporary struggle for self-*government* is fundamentally different from struggles for and the enjoyment of self-*determination* in the past. My own research, as well as that of a number of anthropologists, suggests tribal peoples did not have government. Thus, not only is the struggle for self-*government* a recent phenomenon, but it is also a consequence of radical *changes* in tribal political collectivities.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the empirical insights that the Native government approach has provided demonstrates overwhelmingly the need to conduct research at the community level if we are to understand Native self-government and the politics of Native people generally.

Shared Assumptions

These approaches have provided valuable insights into the study of Native politics, many of which will be drawn upon in this study. But, all of these approaches share one or more of the following theoretical assumptions that limit their capacities to construct a comprehensive explanation of the struggle for aboriginal self-government.

First, all of these approaches assume continuity in the politics of aboriginal peoples. This assumption begs important questions: Were the principles of Canadian Indian policy *established* by the time of Confederation, or were there fundamental changes? Are Indian reserves an extension of colonialism in a new form, or are they a product of a different process? Did aboriginal peoples *always* have government, or is government something that has been acquired? Is the current quest for aboriginal self-determination a *continuation* of a tradition, or is this quest different in character? To answer the affirmative to the second part of these questions (or to even contemplate it) means considering the view that history is not a continuous, unbroken, unfolding of events but, rather, that history is marked by critical moments that lead to fundamental changes in the development of societies. Although the assumption by many scholars of continuity is pervasive, it is mistaken.

Second, current approaches tackle the question of aboriginal self-government and aboriginal politics more generally from an *intrasocietal* perspective. That aboriginal societies possess structures and processes (economic, cultural, social, and political) fundamentally different from the societies that dominate them, few would disagree. Yet, researchers continue to analyze aboriginal communities as part of the dominant societies. In contrast to current approaches, it is more productive to treat aboriginal communities as disparate societies, not as subcultural and subeconomic variants of (although interconnected with) the larger society. Our explanatory unit of analysis should be Native communities, not the larger society.

Because of the above theoretical assumptions of current approaches, there is a strong tendency to view Native self-government as a problem of the *larger* society. The fundamental concern is with how larger societies have treated aboriginal peoples, and how larger societies might treat aboriginal peoples in the future. At present, the only perspective that starts with self-government as a problem of *aboriginal* communities is the Native self-government approach. Only by accepting the premise that aboriginal communities possess their own logic of political development can we hope to explain their efforts to acquire greater political autonomy.

Fourth, current approaches generally assume that the politics of aboriginal peoples is a question of *haves and have nots*. The question of what is to be had, of course, varies with each approach--for public policy, it is a question of jurisdiction; for ethnic mobilization, it is status and power within society; for political economy, it is a question of position within the social division of labour. But, these approaches do not hold fundamentally different conceptions of the political; they only offer different ways of explaining the *same* question: why does the larger society *have* and aboriginal people *have not*.

Methodological Limitations

In addition to theoretical underdevelopment, one of the primary reasons research on aboriginal politics is limited is the paucity of comparative research. Overwhelmingly, researchers undertake single country studies. As Fleras and Elliott correctly observe, "[t]he study of aboriginal politics in the 1990s lacks a much-needed comparative dimension."[22] Surprisingly, however, some scholars eschew comparative research because of the theoretical complications that it raises. In his seminal work, *Home and Native Land*, for instance, Michael Asch writes:

> When I first contemplated how I would present my case in the text, I rejected the idea of comparing the situation of native peoples of Canada with other similar situations in the world. My reasoning was based on observation. Usually, the comparison advanced is between Canadian native peoples and those of the United States, New Zealand and Denmark (Greenland). It is one which I raised in my classes, but found that it resulted not in a clarification of the issues nor an advancement of the argument, but rather in the creation of additional questions that needed answers.[23]

But, if we are to understand the politics of aboriginal peoples, do we not need to answer these "additional questions" first? Unless researchers are willing to grapple with the problems for "clarification" that comparative research generates, our understanding of aboriginal politics is unlikely to go beyond the limited observations that single country studies produce. And, unless researchers are willing to uncover the common patterns that exist across societal contexts, they risk mistaking particular instances for generalizable cases. It may come as a surprise to some, for example, that Canada is one of the very few countries in the world in which aboriginal rights are recognized in a national constitution. This may reflect Canadian fixation with constitutional-legal questions regarding aboriginal rights and self-government; but surely it misses the central commonalities that aboriginal peoples in Canada share with aboriginal peoples in other countries who, too, are seeking greater political autonomy.

It is also important to distinguish what comparative research is not. There are a number of edited volumes which are no more than collections of single country studies but which aim to be "comparative." But, with the possible exception of the introduction, which provides an overview of the works included, frequently no attempt is made at any comparative analysis.[24] This so-called comparative research also extends to monographs. A recent example of a work which is supposedly comparative is Fleras and Elliotts', *The Nations Within*. From a methodological perspective, this work is weak in case selection and even weaker in methodology. The cases that the authors select are all "liberal democracies supported by capitalist economies [and] . . . all settler societies in which most of the earliest immigrants, with the exception of the French in Canada, came from the British Isles."[25] Is it any surprise Fleras and Elliott discover that "certain common patterns are discernible in the experiences of other liberal democracies such as New Zealand and the United States ..." and in those of Canada?[26] All that Fleras and Elliot have managed to do is to repeat the same case three times. But, even weaker than their case selection is their use of the comparative method. Other than making limited comparative references between Canada and New Zealand within a middle chapter and other than drawing some comparative observations among the three countries in the conclusion, no attempt is made at applying the comparative method. Each country within the body of the work is treated as an independent case.

Theoretical and Methodological Alternatives

To understand the quest for aboriginal self-government, we must take research in a fundamentally different direction: we must change our focus theoretically and methodologically. Theoretically, we must reject the analytical premises of current approaches to the study of aboriginal politics. We should treat aboriginal collectivities as disparate political communities, distinct from the societies that dominate them, and recognize that they possess their own structures and processes, and logic of political development. Our analytical reference point should be aboriginal collectivities, not dominant societies. Accordingly, we should see the struggle for Native self-government not as one between haves and have nots, but rather as one of survival of indigenous ways of life. Finally, we must view the struggle for Native self-government as a sociopolitical episode with identifiable origins and outcomes. Methodologically, we must move away from descriptive studies of aboriginal politics in individual countries and move toward rigorous comparative analyses of the processes of political development across societies. Only then can we unravel the cultural, economic, social, and political threads which fuel the drive for aboriginal self-determination.

Politics: The Struggle Between Friend and Enemy

As we have discovered, current approaches view the politics of aboriginal peoples as the politics of *haves and have nots.* This predominant view is understandable: it is the predominant view of the study of politics in general. David Easton, for example, defines politics as "the authoritative allocation of values for a society."[27] Harold Lasswell defines politics as the "study of influence and the influential."[28] But does this conception of *haves and have nots* grasp the essence of the struggle for Native self-government? Can this conception satisfactorily explain incidents like Oka?

Against Easton and Lasswell's "vertically-oriented" conception of politics, Schmitt advances a "horizontally-oriented" conception--politics as the struggle between friend and enemy. This conception of politics is not new, but it received its most succinct expression in Schmitt's enduring work, *The Concept of the Political.*[29] In this work, Schmitt seeks to put forward a definition of the *political* to break the tautological circle of defining the state as something political, and the political as something to do with the state. Schmitt observes that most areas of human thought and action possess their own criterion of ultimate distinction. For morality, the distinction is between good and evil; for aesthetics, beautiful and ugly. Schmitt argues that the political, too, possesses its own criterion of distinction: "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy."[30]

What does Schmitt mean by friend and enemy? For Schmitt, the friend-enemy distinction is an existential, not symbolic, one. The enemy is a real social collectivity which threatens one's existence as a community:

> Each participant [exclusively] is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence.[31]

The struggle between friend and enemy is the politics of aboriginal-state relations. In contrast to colonial and absolutist regimes, the modern state has taken exceptional measures--intentional and unintentional--to destroy indigenous ways of life. The creation of residential schools, reserves and national soviets, and the banning of potlatches and shamanism were not economic, but political acts. The state did not need to go to such lengths to exploit resources and people; it chose to do so because it wanted to transform indigenous ways of life out of existence.

On the other side, Native communities, for example, do not oppose logging or the oil and mineral development because others are exploiting *their* resources and, as a consequence, *they* are not receiving their fair share. *Political* acts such as blockades occur because logging and oil exploration threaten indigenous ways of life. For indigenous peoples, the modern state is the enemy. The struggle for Native self-government is the *political* struggle taken "to repulse" the enemy. As John Bodley correctly asserts, "[a]t the outset the problem must be viewed in long-term perspective as a struggle between two incompatible cultural systems--tribes and states."[32]

Societies, Political Communities and Government

Most studies of aboriginal politics employ the concept of society as the contextual background to begin their investigation; the society is usually the dominant one, but sometimes it is an aboriginal community. The concept of society itself, however, is usually assumed and left undefined. Some of the often unstated assumptions are that society is an entity with both clearly de-limited territorial *and* social boundaries, and that society encompasses the totality of social relations among that bounded set of individuals. These assumptions are not unproblematic. Individuals who could be members of a society often live beyond the territorial boundaries of that society. On the other hand, many individuals who may live within the territorial boundaries of a society may not be considered members of it socially. Moreover, societal boundaries are usually very permeable. Where does the Canadian automobile industry end, and where does the American start? Or does it even make sense to refer to anything but a North American automobile industry? What about the media and culture? Tilly argues convincingly that societies as entities apart do not exist and that we are further ahead if we, as social scientists, did not operate as if they did.[33]

Even though what we call Canada has very permeable social boundaries (and arguably territorial ones in the North, as well), we nevertheless recognize there is a collectivity of people called Canadians who share a common social history and political institutions that sets it apart from other similar collectivities. The same can be argued in the case of aboriginal peoples. Even though aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia do live within the territorial boundaries of these two countries, and even though aboriginal peoples are enmeshed in a variety of social relations with the dominant social collectivity, it can be argued that aboriginal peoples are no more a *part* of Canadian society than Canada is a *part* of American society.

Political community is a concept analogous to society in its concern with the social relations of a collectivity. However, its greater utility lies in that it possesses limited and determinable criteria for defining relevant social collectivities (not all social relations are of equivalent importance), thus overcoming many of the boundary problems inherent in the term society, and that it focuses attention to problems of the *political*. How do we define political community? Weber suggests that

> a separate "political" community is constituted where we find (1) a "territory"; (2) the availability of physical force for its domination; and (3) social action which is not restricted exclusively to the satisfaction of common economic needs in the frame of a communal economy, but regulates more generally the interrelation of the inhabitants of the territory.[34]

In other words, a political community is a social collectivity that inhabits an identifiable territory, shares a common way of life, and is prepared to defend its way of life over that territory. As we can see, political community offers a much less vague analytical referent than does the concept of society--the criteria are determinable and limited, and it dovetails closely with the Schmittian conception of the *political*.

However, two important questions arise with this Weberian conception of political community: First, does territory need to be fixed for a social collectivity to be considered a political community? In other words, do nomadic groups--notably, most indigenous peoples before European contact--count as political communities? Second, what is the relationship between political community and government?

In regards to the first question, Anthony Giddens argues that nomadic groups, including small, hunter-gatherer bands do, in fact, possess a conception of territoriality: "nomadic societies occupy definite, if only diffusely bounded, social spaces which they lay claim to, even if only in a temporary way."[35] And, while hunter-gather bands "may lack fixed settlements . . . they do typically lay claim to the legitimate control of a domain as their 'territory of operation'."[36] Further, he concludes, "If 'territoriality' is taken to mean first and foremost the formation of a type of authoritative resource--claim to legitimate domination over a spatial extension--it must not be associated only with the settlement of villages or cities."[37] Thus, territoriality need not assume fixity.

Significantly, this sociological understanding of territoriality, too, moves us away from juridical conceptions which imply some type of ownership of land as territory as the point of departure. The sociological conception does include political communities such as nation-states which claim not only domination, but also actual ownership of de-limited, spatial extensions. But, it also includes indigenous peoples who make no claim to ownership of land as territory per se, but only exclusive occupation of it. As we shall later see, these different conceptions of territoriality were and still are a major source of conflict between European and indigenous peoples.

Government

Along with territoriality, the relationship between government and political community needs to be clarified. In his classic work, *The Governing of Men*, Ranney defines government as a "body of persons and institutions that make and enforce laws for a particular society."[38] Although other social organizations make rules that apply to their respective members, only government makes rules that are "*authoritative*--that is, . . . binding upon all the members of the society."[39] Dickerson and Flanagan, in a similar vein, define government as "a specialized activity of those individuals and institutions that make and enforce public decisions that are binding upon the whole community."[40] From these two definitions, government is said to exist if the following elements are present: First, it is an institution or set of institutions, that is, "stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior;"[41] in other words, government is not ephemeral. Second, it makes *authoritative* decisions. The capacity of government to make decisions does not rest on the ability to influence members of a community, nor does it rely exclusively on coercion. Rather, it can make decisions because it possesses the right of command. Third, government makes binding decisions. Unlike other organizations, all members of a community are compelled to obey the decisions that government makes. In sum, government is that institution, no matter how rudimentary, which makes authoritative and binding decisions for a political community.

While there is little disagreement that modern state societies possess government, this is not the case for indigenous peoples. In political science it is heresy to suggest that a society can exist without government; Dunleavy and O'Leary, for instance, argue that "government is intrinsic to human society, because a society which is totally uncontrolled, unguided and unregulated is a contradiction in terms."[42] But, in anthropology it is not. Perhaps the most notable anthropologist who has challenged the assumption that government or "the state" is intrinsic to human society is Clastres. In his seminal work, *Society Against the State*, Clastres cogently argues that so-called primitive societies do not possess government. While indigenous communities may have chiefs, they are chiefs without authority or decision-making power. Instead of performing the role of ruler, Clastres argues, the chief possesses three traits: he is peacemaker for the group, he is generous with his possessions, and he is a good orator. The last trait is particularly important. Because the chief does not possess authority, or the right of command, he must depend upon his ability to persuade in order to settle a dispute or any other duty he is called upon to perform. Clastres notes: "What we are dealing with is a chief without power, and an institution, the chieftainship, that is a stranger to its essence, which is authority."[43] Thus, decisions made in indigenous communities are neither authoritative, nor binding. Instead, decisions must be arrived at by consensus and are, in the end, voluntary. When there is a failure to reach a consensus, either discord and conflict continue, or a dissatisfied faction leaves the group to join another community or to establish its own community. It is, therefore, more accurate to describe indigenous political communities as anarchical.[44]

Territoriality is integral to the existence of political community, and we have argued that tribal peoples do possess conceptions of territoriality, albeit different in important ways from that of Europeans. But, we have also argued that tribal peoples do not possess government. Does this mean that tribal peoples are not political communities? In outlining his concept of political community, Weber himself suggests that government is *not* a requisite element:

> On the other hand, a political community may restrict its social action exclusively to the bare maintenance of its domination over a territory, and it has in fact done so frequently enough. Even in the case of this function, the action of the political community is, in many cases, intermittent, no matter what its general level of development may be in other respects. Such action flares up in response to external threat or

> to an internal sudden impulse to violence, however motivated; it dies down, yielding factually to a state of 'anarchy' during 'normal' peaceful times, when coexistence and social action on the part of the inhabitants of the territory take the form of merely factual mutual respect for the accustomed economic spheres, without the availability of any kind of coercion either for external or internal use.[45]

So long as a social collectivity shares a way of life, and so long as that social collectivity is prepared to defend its way of life across the territory it occupies, it constitutes as political community. It matters not if social order is maintained by government or by other, non-authoritative, non-binding mechanisms. Thus, some political communities possess government; others do not.

Political Development

Aboriginal social collectivities possess their own logics of political development. Yet, very few scholars take this analytical perspective. Instead, social change of aboriginal peoples, especially in the twentieth century, is seen as part of the social processes of the dominant society. This view is mistaken. It fails to explain the persistence of aboriginal communities as disparate societies, as well as the current efforts of aboriginal communities to gain greater political autonomy. Culturally, economically, and politically, Quebec is arguably more a part of Canadian society, and Ukraine is much more a part of Soviet (Russian) society, than aboriginal peoples are a part of the dominant society in either Canada or Russia. Yet, scholars have cogently analyzed Ukraine and Quebec, both as separate societies with their own particular path of political development, and as political communities in search of greater autonomy. The study of aboriginal peoples requires the same perspective.

Political development like many concepts in the social sciences, however, has no one agreed upon definition. Marxists conceptualize political development either in terms of transitions from one mode of production to another, or in terms of the social and political changes and conflicts that accompany economic change within a mode of production. Dependency theorists, using a modified Marxist framework, attempt to explain *under*development: the lack of social and political change that accompanies exploitation by more economically powerful societies. For liberal-modernizationists, political development means the transformation of traditional societies into capitalist, liberal-democratic ones. Although the sources, processes, and ends of political development vary among the different theoretical schools, they do share a common concern with fundamental social and political change (or the lack of it). Modifying Huntington's definition of revolution, we can define political development--

in general terms--as fundamental change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its social and economic organization, and, above all, in its political institutions.[46]

The study of political development, however, is not only concerned with what social and political changes occur, but also with how fundamental social and political change is effected. Contrary to many accounts of political development, notably materialist, the conception of political development advanced here supports neither monocausal, nor functionalist, nor exclusively endogenous explanations of social and political change. Instead, political development is understood to be affected by a plurality of factors--economic, cultural, and political--with no one factor wholly reducible to any other, and no one factor decisive in explaining all social and political change. Moreover, social change is understood to result from the conjuncture of particular historical conditions. In the words of Giddens, "If all social life is contingent, all social change is conjunctural."[47] Finally, political development is understood just as likely to result from exogenous as it is from endogenous sources. In the case of indigenous peoples, this is especially true.

Sociopolitical Episode

Linked to the notion that aboriginal peoples possess their own logic of political development is the concept that the struggle for aboriginal self-government is a sociopolitical episode. According to Giddens, "'Episodes refer to processes of social change which have a definite direction and form, analysed through comparative research, in which a major transition takes place whereby one type of society is transformed into another."[48] In another work Giddens modifies his concept of *episode* to include changes in fundamental institutions of society, as opposed to only changes in societal totalities as wholes. It is more accurate to view the struggle for self-government from the perspective that it has identifiable origins and outcomes, and that in the process fundamental changes take place in aboriginal communities. The struggle for self-government is not a continuation of past struggles, but a break with the past.

Comparative Method

Along with moving in new directions theoretically, the study of aboriginal politics also requires taking new paths methodologically: the study of aboriginal politics is in need of comparative research.

Usually comparative studies of aboriginal peoples, such as they exist, are limited to comparisons among Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States--English speaking, capitalist, liberal democracies; sometimes the comparisons extend to the non-English speaking countries of Scandinavia, as well. Comparisons among similar cases are very effective when unexpected and variant outcomes emerge. The task, then, is to discover the cause, that is the set of conjunctural conditions, that produced different outcomes among outwardly similar cases. This strategy is referred to as Mill's method of difference. However, comparative analysis among similar cases is weaker when the outcome to be explained occurs across all cases. A better strategy, in this instance, is to select outwardly dissimilar cases (that is cases which possess disparate attributes which may be causally relevant) in order to discover the causal factor that is common among cases. This strategy is referred to as Mill's method of agreement.[49] The most powerful comparative research is that which combines both strategies. Table 1.1 illustrates Mill's two methods:

Table 1.1 *Two Designs for Macro-Analytic Comparative History (from John Stuart Mill)*

The Method of Agreement

Case 1	Case 2	Case n
a	d	g
b	e	h
c	f	i
x	x	x
y	y	y

The Method of Difference

Positive case(s)	Negative case(s)
a	a
b	b
c	c
x	not x
y	not y

Key:
x = causal variable
y = phenomenon to be explained

Using Mill's method of agreement, aboriginal political communities in Canada and Russia are compared before and, then, after modern state building to demonstrate similar historical outcomes under different historical circumstances, except for one, modern state building. Then, using Mill's methods of difference, Canada is compared against itself, before and after Confederation, as is Russia, before and after the 1917 Revolution, to demonstrate divergent historical outcomes--the transformation of aboriginal political communities--under similar historical conditions, except for one, modern state building.

Why Aboriginal Peoples of Canada and Russia?

Because of geographical and cultural similarities, the aboriginal peoples of Russia and Canada make very good comparative referents. This is important because it controls for alternative explanations of historical outcomes based on differences in geography or ways of life. In both countries, the majority of aboriginal peoples historically inhabited the boreal forests (taiga), or the Arctic tundra. With exceptions of reindeer herding in Russia and horticulture in Canada, the aboriginal peoples of Canada and Russia also shared a common hunter-gathering mode of subsistence. The hunting of caribou and moose for food and clothing, for example, was common among aboriginal peoples on both continents. Indigenous peoples in Canada and Russia, not surprisingly, also hunted the same or similar furbearing animals. In addition, the materials and methods of making clothing, drums, and skin and bark shelters were shared across continents. Thus, while there are differences between the aboriginal peoples of northern Eurasia and North America, the commonalities predominate.

Although the ways of life of aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia had strong similarities, the historical contexts of aboriginal peoples in these two countries after contact with Europeans were markedly different. These differences are important to highlight because they are causally relevant. Culturally, Canada is a Western country: individualism, secularism, civil and political rights are central hallmarks. Civil society exists apart from the state. By contrast, Russia is a non-Western, Slavic country: the collective, not the individual, is of greater importance; conceptions of civil and political rights have never taken root. Only today is a civil society, separate from the state, beginning to emerge. Economically, Canada is a capitalist country; while it does possess a public sector and while the state has played an important role in Canadian economic development, it is the market, not the state, that drives the Canadian economy. In Russia, on the other hand, capitalism has never taken root. Russia went from feudalism to state socialism, and whether Russia can now move to capitalism may only be answered in the next century. Politically, Canada has been a liberal democracy for over a hundred years. Russia, by contrast, existed for centuries under Czarist absolutism and then for seventy years under Soviet authoritarianism; like its economic transformation, Russia's political transformation is far from certain. These different factors--cultural, economic, and political--led to very different state-society relations in Canada and Russia. Accordingly, we would also expect to see divergent aboriginal-state relations. Canada and Russia, therefore, make good comparative referents because causally relevant factors identified by other scholars, such as capitalism, do not exist in both cases. Yet, the outcome to be explained--struggles for self-government--does.

Employing both theoretical and methodological alternatives, this dissertation turns to the problem of the struggle for aboriginal self-government in Canada and Russia.

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[10] James S. Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts*, 3rd ed. (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1988), 366.

[11] Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, *Indians of the Americas: Human Rights and Self-determination* (London: Zed Books., Ltd, 1984).

[12] Nicole St. Onge, "Race, Class and Metis Marginality," in *Race, Class, Gender: Bonds and Barriers*, ed. Jesse Vorst et al (Winnipeg: The Society for Socialist Studies, 1989), 128.

[13] Some might argue that the USSR was an instance of "state capitalism." For a caustic critique of why the state-socialist economies were not capitalist, see Hillel Ticktin's articles in *Critique*, Nos. 16, 17 and 20-21 (1987).

[14] Stephen Cornell, *The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Tom G. Svensson, *Ethnicity and Mobilization in Sami Politics* (Stockholm: Department of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm, 1976).

[15] Svensson, *Ethnicity and Mobilization in Sami Politics*, 13.

[16] Frank Cassidy and Robert L. Bish, *Indian Government: Its Meaning in Practice* (Lantzville, B.C.: Oolichan Books, 1989).

[17] J. Anthony Long, "Political Revitalization in Canadian Native Indian Societies, " *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 4 (December 1990).

[18] T.C. Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991).

[19] Ibid., xiv.

[20] Ibid., 4.

[21] Cassidy and Bish, *Indian Government*, 3.

[22] Fleras and Elliot, *The Nations Within*, ix. Unfortunately, the authors who made this observation contributed little to the comparative study of aboriginal politics in their own work exploring aboriginal-state relation in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand.

[23] Michael Asch, *Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1988), ix.

[24] See, for example, *Indigenous Peoples and the Nation-State*, ed. Noel Dyck (St. John's, NFLD: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1989); and *Native Power: The Quest for Autonomy and Nationhood of Indigenous Peoples*, ed. Jens Brosted et al. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget As, 1985).

[25] Fleras and Elliott, *The Nations Within*, x.

[26] Ibid., 220.

[27] David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[28] Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: P. Smith, 1950).

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[29] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1976).

[30] Ibid., 26.

[31] Ibid., 27.

[32] John Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 3rd ed. (Mountain View, Caliornia: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1990), 3.

[33] Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1984), 20-26.

[34] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 902.

[35] Ibid., 45.

[36] Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley: University of Calirfornia Press, 1981), 92.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Austin Ranney, *The Governing of Men*, rev. ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966).

[39] Ibid., 23.

[40] Mark O. Dickerson and Thomas Flanagan, *An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach*, 4th ed. (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1994), 5.

[41] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 12.

[42] Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary, *Theories of the State: The Politics of Liberal Democracy* (London: MacMillan Education Ltd, 1987), 1.

[43] Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State* (New York: Zone Books, 1987), 206.

[44] Anarchy or the absence of government does imply social disorder or chaos. Rather, in anarchical political communities, order is achieved through non-authoritative means, notably through diffuse social sanctions. See Harold Barclay, *People Without Government* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), 16-27.

[45] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 902.

[46] This definition is a modification of Samuel Huntington's definition of revolution: Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 264.

[47] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 245.

[48] Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 82.

[49] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History and Macrosociological Inquiry," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 22 (1980): 181-87.

CHAPTER TWO
Peoples Without Government

One of the most widely held myths is that at the time of first contact with Europeans, indigenous societies were self-governing political communities. As Cassidy and Bish contend, "Indian peoples in Canada traditionally enjoyed self-government long before Europeans arrived in the land. They have always had their own governments."[1] True, some aboriginal peoples, especially the Indians of the Northwest Coast, may have had processes to make authoritative and binding decisions for members of their political communities. But, this was not the case for most. In fact, prior to contact with Europeans, most hunter-gatherer and hunter-herder peoples of northern Eurasia and northern North America did not have government. To the extent that decisions were made that affected the well-being of the entire political community, these decisions were arrived at by consensus and in the end were voluntary, not binding. This is crucial to understand. It is often assumed that all indigenous peoples had some form of "tribal government" before sustained contact with Europeans and, thus, any political change to aboriginal political communities that occurred was of degree rather than of kind. To the contrary, the political change that did occur in aboriginal political communities was a radical break with traditional forms of political organization. Peoples without government were transformed into peoples with government.

In addition, it is sometimes assumed that the foundations of aboriginal political life were undermined soon after contact with Europeans--this, too, was not the case. To be sure, aboriginal peoples experienced tremendous changes in their lives following "first contact." Europeans brought with them technologies such as iron tools and guns. They also brought with them diseases, such as smallpox and tuberculosis, resulting in substantial losses in aboriginal populations. However, these economic and demographic changes, as large as they were, did not result in fundamental changes in the organization of aboriginal political life. During the first three hundred years of contact with Europeans, that is, prior to modern state-building in Russia and Canada, the anarchical nature of tribal political communities endured.

This chapter first surveys the span of aboriginal cultures at the time sustained contact commenced in the sixteenth century. It then focuses on the nature of political life of aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the impact of European contact and expansion for aboriginal political organization prior to modern state-building.

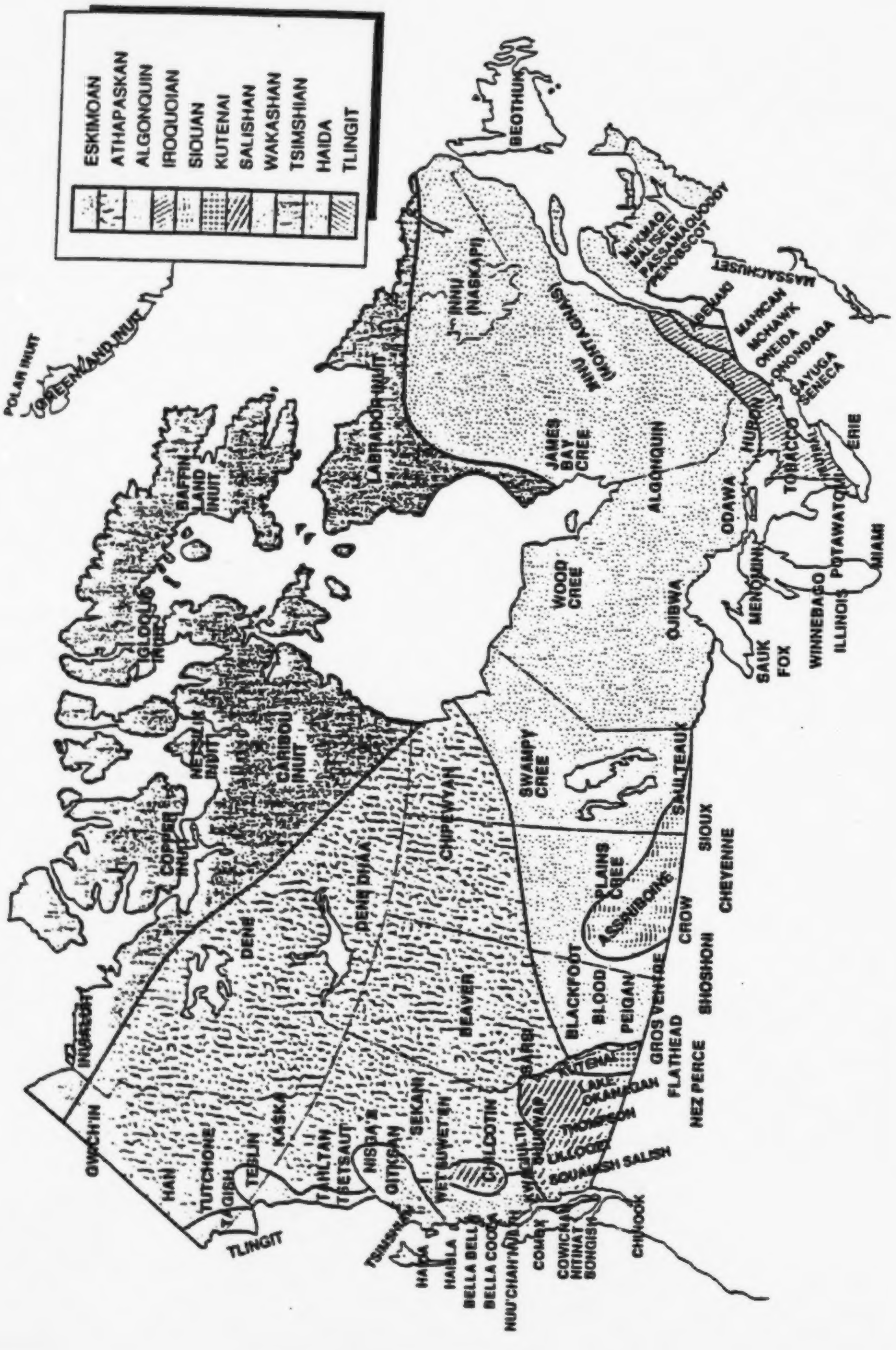
A Diversity of Cultures

To argue that most aboriginal peoples of Canada and Russia were anarchical does not imply that they were homogeneous. Quite the opposite. At the time of sustained contact with Europeans, aboriginal peoples in what are today Canada and Russia represented very diverse cultures. It is generally agreed, for instance, that there were no fewer than fifty aboriginal languages in Canada (see Map 2.1), and no fewer than twenty-six in Russia (see Map 2.2).[2] Cultural diversity was also reflected in the different subsistence patterns on both continents. The breadth of this diversity was greater in Canada than in Russia due in part to the greater climatic and geographical variation of the former. More significant than the degree of diversity in subsistence activities, however, was the way in which these subsistence activities shaped patterns of traditional political organization, that is, whether anarchical political organization was likely to exist or not, and what form it might take. An overview of the nature of traditional subsistence activities is presented below.

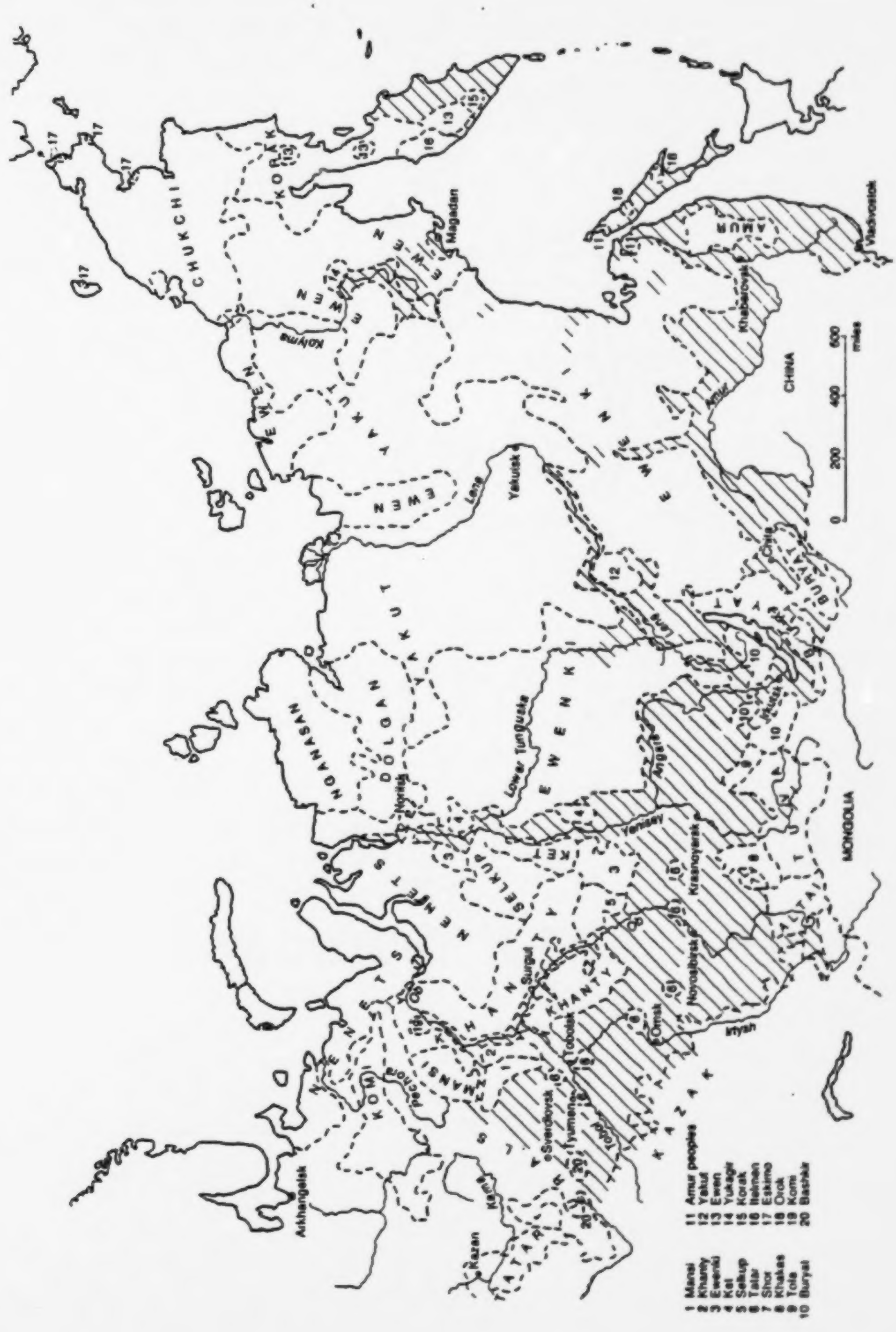
In Canada, anthropologists have identified seven distinct "cultural areas": Arctic, Western Sub-Arctic, Eastern Sub-Arctic, Plateau, Plains, Northwest Coast, and Eastern Woodlands.[3] The Eastern Woodlands and the Northwest Coast were distinct from the other cultural areas of Canada in that their population densities were higher and in that there were extant sedentary and semi-sedentary communities. In the Eastern Woodlands, the Iroquoian peoples practised slash and burn horticulture, growing corn, beans, squash. As a consequence, communities "moved every ten to twelve years when conditions (e.g., soil exhaustion) warranted."[4] Despite the heavy reliance on plant crops, hunting remained an important source of food. Men hunted during the spring, summer, and winter for large game such as moose, deer, and bear, and hunted for small game, such as otter and beaver, in the spring and earlier summer.[5] These semi-sedentary communities were relatively large, numbering on average about five hundred persons.[6] Other Eastern Woodland peoples included the Micmac and the Malecite of the Atlantic region; however, they were nomadic, living in smaller groups of thirty to forty people or more, and depended upon hunting and gathering (including exploiting the marine resources of the Atlantic), as opposed to horticulture, for their primary food sources.[7] On the other side of Canada, the Northwest Coast peoples, such as the Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian pursued a fishing-hunting way of life. The rich resources of the sea, particularly, salmon, cod, halibut, oolichan, shellfish, and marine mammals, provided for the development of sedentary communities with high populations.

Dickason notes, however, "by far the majority of Canada's original peoples were hunters and gatherers. . . ."[8] The hunter-gatherers of Canada constituted the five other culture areas, and displayed considerable

Map 2.1 *Aboriginal Language Groups in Canada*


ESKIMOAN
ATHAPASKAN
ALGONQUIN
IROQUOIAN
SIOUAN
KUTENAI
SALISHAN
WAKASHAN
TSIMSHIAN
HAIDA
TLINGIT
POLAR INUIT
GREENLAND INUIT
BEOTHUK
LABRADOR INUIT
BAFFIN LAND INUIT
IGLOOLIK INUIT
NETSILIK INUIT
CARIBOU INUIT
COPPER INUIT
INUVIALUIT
INNU (NASKAPI)
INNU (MONTAGNAIS)
MI'KMAQ
MALISEET
PASSAMAQUODDY
PENOBSCOT
ABENAKI
MASSACHUSET
MAHICAN
MOHAWK
ONEIDA
ONONDAGA
CAYUGA
SENECA
HURON
TOBACCO
NEUTRAL
ERIE
JAMES BAY CREE
ALGONQUIN
ODAWA
WOOD CREE
OJIBWA
MENOMINI
POTAWATOMI
MIAMI
WINNEBAGO
ILLINOIS
SAUK
FOX
SWAMPY CREE
SAULTEAUX
SIOUX
PLAINS CREE
ASSINIBOINE
CHEYENNE
CROW
SHOSHONI
CHIPEWYAN
DENE
DENE DHAA
BEAVER
BLACKFOOT
BLOOD
PEIGAN
GROS VENTRE
FLATHEAD
NEZ PERCE
SARSI
KUTENAI
LAKE OKANAGAN
THOMPSON
SHUSWAP
LILLOOET
SQUAMISH SALISH
CHINOOK
GWICH'IN
HAN
TUTCHONE
TAGISH
TEHLIN
KASKA
TAHLTAN
TSETSAUT
SEKANI
NISGA'A
GITKSAN
WET'SUWET'EN
CHILCOTIN
TSIMSHIAN
HAIDA
HAISLA
BELLA BELLA
BELLA COOLA
NUU'CHAH'NULTH
KWAKWAKA'WAKW
COMOX
COWICHAN
NITINAT
SONGISH
TLINGIT

Map 2.2 *Aboriginal Language Groups in Russia*

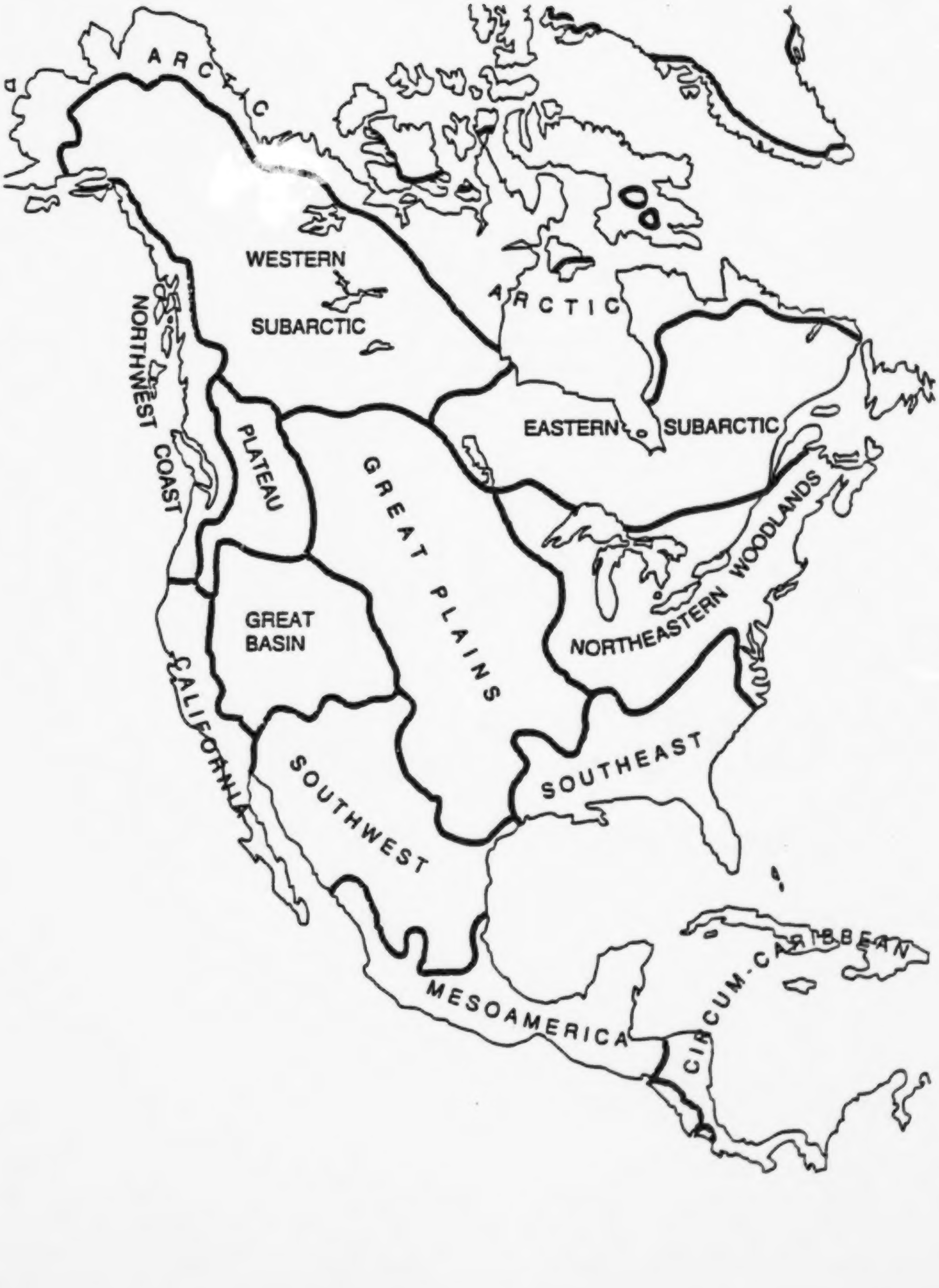

CHUKCHI
KORYAK
EWEN
YAKUT
DOLGAN
NGANASAN
EWENK
NENETS
SELKUP
KET
KHANTY
MANSI
KOMI
TATAR
KAZAK
ALTAY
BURYAT
AMUR
CHINA
MONGOLIA
Magadan
Kolyma
Lena
Yakutsk
Lower Tunguska
Norilsk
Yenisey
Angara
Krasnoyarsk
Novosibirsk
Omsk
Irtysh
Tobolsk
Surgut
Tyumen
Sverdlovsk
Pechora
Kama
Kazan
Arkhangelsk
Irkutsk
Chita
Khabarovsk
Amur
Vladivostok
0 200 400 600 miles
1 Mansi
2 Khanty
3 Ewenki
4 Ket
5 Selkup
6 Tatar
7 Shor
8 Khakas
9 Tofa
10 Buryat
11 Amur peoples
12 Yakut
13 Ewen
14 Yukagir
15 Koryak
16 Itelmen
17 Eskimo
18 Orok
19 Komi
20 Bashkir

variation in their subsistence activities, depending upon not only the flora and fauna of a given region, but also upon its geography. Wedged between the Northwest Coast and the Plains culture areas, the Plateau culture area shared features of both (see Map 2.3). "The central resource for most Interior groups was salmon."[9] The western Plateau peoples, such as the Thompson, depended heavily on salmon runs which supported high population densities.[10] The communities of other Plateau peoples, for instance, the Okanagan and the Shuswap were considerably smaller as they were further upstream where the salmon resources were less bountiful. Moreover, the Okanagan depended more heavily on deer, elk and bighorn sheep and other large mammals. Nevertheless, in contrast to the peoples of the Northwest Coast, the Plateau peoples were nomadic or semi-nomadic: "The Plateau economy was based on a seasonal movement, with people living and working in small mobile bands from spring to fall. In winter, several bands might join to form a larger relatively permanent village with more substantial housing [semi-subterranean pit-houses]."[11] Nomadism was even more pronounced among the Kutenai who lived in smaller bands and who often hunted buffalo on the eastern side of the Rockies.

The Plains culture area was also defined by nomadism. However, unlike the Plateau peoples who depended on fish, the life of the Plains peoples revolved around the bison. The Blackfoot in particular did not think very highly of fish as a source of food. Contrary to the commonly held view of Plains people as fundamentally a horse society, the horse did not become central to Plains culture for transportation and hunting until the mid-eighteenth century. Instead, dogs were used to pull travois, and bison were corralled on foot into pounds or over jumps. For much of the year, the different Plains tribes lived in smaller bands, coming together for communal hunts, feasts, or other important events.

The three remaining culture areas--Arctic, Western Sub-Arctic and Eastern Sub-Arctic have much in common, despite important differences in geography. The Arctic culture area was defined by the tundra and was dominated by the relatively recent newcomers, the Inuit. Most Inuit of the Canadian Arctic were primarily marine mammal hunters (whales, seals, and walruses) and fishers, with caribou hunting playing a secondary, though often important role. The main exception were the Caribou Inuit of the interior barrens west of Hudson Bay whose primary source of food, as their name suggests, was from hunting caribou. In both cases, however, Inuit lived in small, nomadic bands, and membership was extremely fluid. In the case of the marine-mammal hunters, larger camps, numbering a hundred people, formed in winter as many hunters were required to watch the breathing holes of seals; in summer, these camps split into smaller bands. As a result, population densities in the Canadian Arctic were among the lowest of the seven culture areas.[12]

Map 2.3 *Aboriginal Cultural Areas in Canada*


ARCTIC
WESTERN SUBARCTIC
ARCTIC
NORTHWEST COAST
PLATEAU
GREAT PLAINS
EASTERN SUBARCTIC
NORTHEASTERN WOODLANDS
GREAT BASIN
CALIFORNIA
SOUTHWEST
SOUTHEAST
CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN
MESOAMERICA

By contrast, the Sub-Arctic culture areas were defined by the taiga. The Western culture area was dominated by Athapaskan peoples, such as the Beaver, Slavey, and Gwich'in whereas the Eastern culture area was dominated by Algonkians, such as the Cree, Ojibwa, and Naskapi. Hunting and gathering activities formed the core of traditional subsistence activities, though fishing was important for many, depending on local conditions. Population densities were quite low, and small bands consisting of extended families lived a nomadic way of life. The nomadic cycle, however, was the reverse pattern of the Inuit.

> In the coniferous forests, the Indians followed a nomadic round which in some ways was the obverse of the Eskimos'. During most of autumn, winter and spring, band populations were dispersed in small camps usually not larger than thirty people; in most areas, non-migrating caribou scattered in small herds, was the chief quarry. In summer, large camp groups, commonly entire bands, would assemble at propitious fishing lakes.[13]

It is also important to keep in mind that the Arctic, Western Sub-Arctic, and Eastern Sub-Arctic culture areas represented not only the majority of Canada's Native people, but also the vast majority of Canada's territorial expanse.

Unlike Canada, and North America more generally, no comparable culture area typology exists for the peoples of northern Eurasia. In fact, Krupnik argues, it would be nearly impossible to construct a regionally based culture area typology in Russia because of the wide variations in local economies (see, for example, Map 2.4).[14] This is not to say that "economic-cultural types" have not been established. Prior to sustained contact with Europeans, it is generally agreed that the principal subsistence activities of the aboriginal peoples of northern Eurasia were settled maritime hunting, intensive fishing, and nomadic hunting-gathering often alongside small scale reindeer herding. Despite the common association of reindeer herding economies with the indigenous peoples of northern Russia, intensive reindeer herding is relatively recent, dating back no earlier than the seventeenth century.[15] In addition to subsistence activities, another important cultural division in the Russian North is geography: between the peoples of the taiga and those of the tundra. Accordingly, it may be more useful to highlight representative peoples according to their subsistence activities and geography (tundra hunter-herders, taiga hunter-herders, marine-mammal hunters, and fishers), cutting across regional boundaries.

Among the hunter-herders of the Russian tundra are included the Saami of the Kola Peninsula, the Nenets who straddled the Ural Mountains,

Map 2.4 *Aboriginal Culture Areas in the Russian Far East*

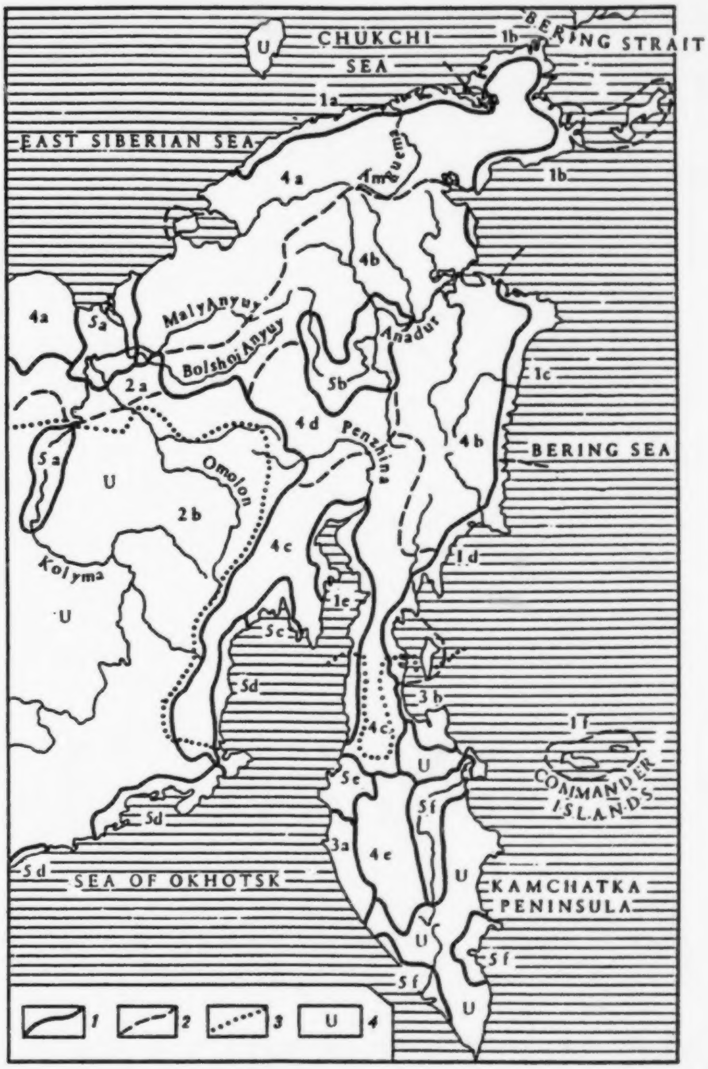

U
CHUKCHI SEA
1b
BERING STRAIT
1a
EAST SIBERIAN SEA
4a
Amguema
1b
4b
4a
5a
Malyi Anyui
Bolshoi Anyui
Anadyr
2a
5b
1c
1c
4d
Penzhina
4b
BERING SEA
5a
U
Omolon
2b
4c
1d
Kolyma
U
1e
5c
5d
3b
4c
1f
U
5e
COMMANDER ISLANDS
5f
5d
3a
4e
5d
SEA OF OKHOTSK
U
KAMCHATKA PENINSULA
U
5f
5f
U
1
2
3
U
4

Fig. 4. Indigenous subsistence patterns in northeast Siberia around 1900. 1: boundaries of major subsistence modes; 2: boundaries of local subsistence patterns; 3: "anthropological" boundary of the Arctic; 4: Unoccupied or sparsely populated areas.

Settled Maritime Hunting: (1a) Arctic Chikchi, (1b) Bering Strait, (1c) Kerek, (1d) Eastern Koryak, (1e) Western Koryak, (1f) Commander Island, *Seminomadic Hunting and Herding:* (2a) Arctic tundra Even, (2b) Subarctic interior Even, *Intensive Fishing:* (3a) Itel'men, (3b) South Koryak, *Intensive Reindeer Herding:* (4a) Northern Chukchi, (4b) Interior Chukchi, (4c) Koyrak, (4d) Chuvants, (4e) Kamchatka Interior, *Metis and Creole Economies:* (5a) Kolyma, (5b) Anadyr River (Markovo), (5c) Gizhiga (northern Okhotsk), (5d) Ola and Okhotsk Kamchadal, (5e) Tigil' Kamchadal, (5f) Kamchatka Old Settlers.

the Even of northeastern Siberia, and the Chukchi of the Chukchi Peninsula. In the sixteenth century, hunting and fishing were still the primary subsistence activities of tundra dwellers. Commenting on one of the largest Russian Native peoples, Krupnik writes: "Hunting and fishing played the main economic role in Nenets life, with game, and caribou meat in particular, serving as the staple food."[16] In fact, not all families owned reindeer herds; those who did typically kept small herds, forty animals was considered a very large herd. Rather than for food or clothing, reindeer were kept almost exclusively for transportation. On the tundra, resources were limited, as were population densities, and people moved with the reindeer in small, highly nomadic bands.

The hunter-herders of the taiga, such as the Khanty and Mansi of western Siberia, the Evenk of eastern Siberia, and the Udege of the Russian Far East, like their tundra counterparts, depended mainly on fishing and hunting. Small herds were kept, but again primarily for transportation. However, in contrast to the tundra, the resources available were markedly greater in the taiga. Gathering activities played a greater role as there was a much more extensive range of plants, including berries and herbs. Nevertheless, nomadism was central to life in the taiga and, in fact, was very similar to the hunter-gatherers of the Canadian sub-Arctic. "In the summer most of them lived in temporary settlements along lakes and rivers; in the winter small bands or solitary hunters pursued bear, moose, wild reindeer, and furbearing animals."[17] Reflecting this way of life, population densities generally were relatively low.

The principal marine-mammal hunters were the coastal Chukchi and the Eskimos (Yuit) of Chukotka, though some Saami and Nenets communities were also engaged in marine-mammal economies. Seal, whale, and walrus provided the foundations of this "economic-cultural type," though wild reindeer periodically were utilized as a primary food source, when maritime resources declined. Notably, population densities fluctuated with availability of marine resources.[18] During periods when marine resources were plentiful, coastal population densities were very high and coastal communities were sedentary. This pattern is different from the experiences of the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic and even Alaska.

While fishing was a common subsistence activity of many of the indigenous peoples of Russia, it was the principal activity of Itel'men of Kamchatka and a central activity of the Nivkh of Sakhalin Island and the lower Amur River. The Itelmen, like many Plateau communities of Canada, were highly dependent upon annual salmon runs, and lived a semi-nomadic way of life: in summer, they lived in "leaf-covered tent-like shelters standing on platforms raised well above the ground on posts;" in winter, they lived in "lodges half-sunk into the ground, with a timber frame covered with earth. . . ."[19] Population densities, moreover, were larger than those of the hunting-herding peoples.

Across this cultural diversity, however, were critical commonalities. Although important cultural differences exist, for instance, between Japan and the United States, both countries share crucial features as liberal democracies with capitalist, industrial economies. So it is with aboriginal peoples. Notwithstanding the cultural differences in terms of language and traditional subsistence activities, the aboriginal peoples of Canada and Russia shared critical commonalities in terms of the nature of their political organization. Needless to say, such a claim leaves one open to the charge of what Lewellen calls "Bongo-Bongoism": "No matter what generalization is made, someone is always able to protest, 'Ah, but in the Bongo Bongo tribe they do it differently.' It is probably safe to say that there is always a Bongo Bongo tribe threateningly positioned at the periphery of every theorist's consciousness."[20] With this in mind, the chapter now turns to the question of aboriginal political life.

Aboriginal Political Organization

The previous chapter defined government as that institution or set of institutions by which authoritative and binding decisions are made for a political community. At the time of contact, most indigenous peoples in northern Eurasia and northern North America were anarchical, that is, political life existed without government. The observation that aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia did not possess government is not new, however. Speck, for instance, argues that the Naskapi of Labrador are people "professing neither political institutions nor government. . . ."[21] In regards to the Evenk (Tungus) of Russia, Shirokogoroff writes, "it must be understood that they did not actually live without any organization, but were organized in a different manner, as they had no chiefs, no permanent administration, and no political officials."[22]

It may be useful, at this point, to draw the distinction between self-government and self-determination. Self-determination means that a political community has the capacity to decide for itself its own way of life and is able to defend its autonomy to do so. Self-government means that decisions made within and by a political community are carried out in an authoritative and binding manner. Thus, the question of self-determination is distinct from that of self-government: a political community can be self-determining without having to possess the institution of government.[23] At the time of contact, most aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia were self-determining, but not self-governing.

To argue that aboriginal peoples were not self-governing, however, is not to argue that there was an ever-present state of chaos or that politics did not exist. Politics existed, but by other means. For many political scientists, it is impossible to imagine politics without government; this is not the case for anthropologists. Lewellen contends:

> In many societies government simply does not exist. This recognition, and the specification of the manner in which the idiom of politics is expressed through the medium of apparently nonpolitical institutions, may be the primary contributions of anthropology to the study of comparative politics.[24]

The anarchical basis of aboriginal political life in Canada and Russia is explored below, through an examination of the units of political organization, group identity, decision-making, leadership, and external relations.

In Canada and Russia, the basic units of political organization for most aboriginal peoples were the band and the tribe. In both instances, kinship formed the foundation of political organization. The primary distinction between bands and tribes is that bands tend to be smaller and have more fluid membership, whereas tribes tend to have greater permanency in terms of clan loyalties and affiliations. Service makes the distinction between band and tribe the following way:

> A band is only an association, more or less residential, of nuclear families, ordinarily numbering 30-100 people, with affinal ties [i.e., through marriage] loosely allying it with one or a few other bands. A tribe is an association of a much larger number of kinship segments which are each composed of families. They are tied more firmly together than are the bands, which use mostly marriage ties alone. A tribe is of the order of a large collection of bands, but it is not *simply* a collection of bands. . . . The important point is that the few intermarrying multifamily local groups that were the whole of the band society are now only a part or aspect of tribal society, and are in some measure transformed by that factor.[25]

The distinction between the two units in practice, as one might expect with any social science concept, is not hard and fast. In particular some have criticized the use of tribe as a concept because "there seem to be few structural, or systemic, limits on the variety of forms."[26] Nevertheless, it is also clear that some aboriginal peoples, such as the Plains Blackfoot or the Eastern Woodland Iroquois, had "more complex integrating institutions than those found in hunting-gathering bands," such as the Inuit.[27] The concept "tribe" acknowledges this difference (see Table 2.1).

The most common unit of aboriginal political organization in Canada was the band. While noting that there were aboriginal peoples in Canada who could accurately be described as tribes, Jenness observes, "in general, whether we examine the Algonkian-speaking peoples, the Athapaskan, or

Table 2.1 *Typology of Stateless Political Communities*

	Uncentralized		*Centralized*
	Band	*Tribe*	*Chiefdom*
Type of Subsistence	Hunting-gathering: little or no domestication	Extensive agriculture (horticulture) and pastoralism	Extensive agriculture: intensive fishing
Type of Leadership	Informal and situational leaders: may have a headman who acts as arbiter in group decision making	Charismatic headman with no "power" but some authority in group decision making	Charismatic chief with limited power based on bestowal of benefits on followers
Type and Importance of Kinship	Bilateral kinship, with kin relations used differentially in changing size and composition of bands	Unilineal kinship (patrilineal or matrilineal) may form the basic structure of society	Unilineal, with some bilateral; descent groups are ranked in status
Major Means of Social Integration	Marriage alliances unite larger groups; bands united by kinship and family; economic interdepend-ence based on reciprocity	Pantribal sodalities based on kin-ship, voluntary associations and/or age-grades	Integration through loyalty to chief, ranked lineages, and voluntary association
Political Succession	May be hereditary headman, but actual leadership falls to those with special knowledge or abilities	No formal means of political succession	Chief's position not directly inherited, but chief must come from a high-ranking lineage
Major Type of Economic Exchange	Reciprocity (sharing)	Reciprocity; trade may be more developed than in bands	Redistribution through chief: must come from a high-ranking lineage
Social Stratification	Egalitarian	Egalitarian	Rank (individual and lineage)
Ownership of Property	Little or no sense of personal ownership	Communal (lineage or clan) ownership of agricultureal lands and cattle	Land communally owned by lineage, but strong sense of personal ownership of titles, names, privileges, ritual artifacts, etc.
Law and Legitimate Control of Force	No Formal laws or punishments; right to use force is communal	No formal laws or punishments; right to use force belongs to lineage, clan or association	May be informal laws and specified punishments for breaking taboos; chief has limited access to physical coercion.
Religion	No religious priesthood or full-time specialists; shamanistic	Shamanistic; strong emphasis on initiation rites and other rites of passage that unite lineages	Inchoate formal priest-hood; hierachical, ancestor-based religion
Recent and Contemporay Examples	!Kung Bushmen (Africa) pygmies (Africa) Eskimo (Canada, Alaska) Shosone (U.S.)	Kpelle (W. Africa) Yanomamo (Venezuela) Nuer (Sudan) Cheyenne (U.S.)	Precolonial Hawaii Kwakiutl (Canada)* Tikopia (Polynesia) Dagus (Mongolia)
Historic and Prehistoric Examples	Virtually all paleolithic societies	Iroquois (U.S.) Oaxaca Valley (Mexico), 1500-1000 B.C.	Precolonial Ashani, Benin, Dahomy (Africa) Scottish Highlanders

*The Kwakiutl shared many characteristics with band and tribal forms of political community.

Source: Ted C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1992).

the Eskimo [Inuit], the only clearly defined political unit was the band."[28] Nomadism, low population densities, and the nature of traditional subsistence activities combined to account, to a significant degree, for band-level organization. In the case of the northern Athapaskan peoples, Coates argues, "The extensive mobility required by such hunting, fishing, and gathering determined the nature of aboriginal social organization. A band system evolved, based on the annual summer gatherings, but even these groups had limited structural significance."[29] (In the case of the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic, low population densities and even greater fluidity in community membership have led some anthropologists to question whether even band organization existed.)[30] Band organization also extended to many of the semi-nomadic, Plateau peoples where the winter village community constituted the largest unit of organization and where "no mechanism existed to link the various communities speaking the same language."[31] Even in the case of peoples with tribal organization, such as the Plains Indians, band affiliations continued to play a central role because of their nomadic way of life. "The need for social mobility was also reflected in their social organization. Each tribal group was divided into a number of independent bands, which were the basic social groups throughout most of the year."[32]

Nevertheless, tribes did exist. Political organization at the level of the tribe was manifest through supraband *sodalities*: formal and informal associations (e.g., clans and warrior societies). In the case of the Iroquois of the Eastern Woodlands, communities were "organized socially on the basis of matrilineal kinship, and membership in a lineage or clan depend[ed] on the affiliation of one's mother."[33] These clans were the foundations of the Iroquois institution, the longhouse. In Blackfoot political life, warrior societies played a similar role, uniting bands in collective efforts such as warfare or bison hunts.

The situation differed little in Russia. In common with the Plateau peoples of Canada, the political organization of the salmon fishers of Kamchatka, for example, did not extend past the band or village level: "The Itelmens had neither chiefs nor tribal organization . . ."[34] The hunting-gathering Evenks, however, who were more nomadic than the Itelmens, did possess tribal level political organization. "The Evenk clans (bands) were part of larger associations of tribes. Clans of one tribe had common territory and were closely bound by marital relations and interests of defense from enemies outside."[35] The constituent bands of Evenk tribes would unite for common action when necessary, notably in times of war. Nevertheless, the clan remained the primary political unit of everyday life: for "much of the time the Tungus [Evenk] lived in small bands consisting of a couple of families in one or two tents, but in summer families of the same clan would congregate in camps of about a dozen tents . . ."[36] Thus, even where tribes existed, the band remained the crucial unit of political life for many aboriginal peoples of Russia and Canada.

Kinship, to a significant degree, not only formed the units of aboriginal political organization; it also shaped aboriginal political identity. To understand the nature of aboriginal political identity, it is useful to contrast it with the nation. As Eriksen argues, "nations create *abstract* communities of a different order from . . . kinship-based communities which pre-dated them."[37] This abstract quality of the "nation" has been captured eloquently by Anderson: "the nation is an imagined political community--and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[38] In contrast, the band (and tribe) is an existential political community. It is *existential* because the members of even the largest aboriginal political community will know many, if not all, of their fellow-members, meet them--face-to-face, and in the minds of each lives the knowledge of their *real* blood relationships.

The self-designation of many aboriginal peoples poignantly demonstrates the existential nature of aboriginal political identity, as well. "In many tribal cultures," states Giddens, "the word denoting members of the community is identical to that used for 'human', outsiders not being accorded that dignity."[39] In Russia, for instance, "Nentsy" is the self-designation of the largest-numbered people of northwestern Siberia and is derived from the word, "man." "The archaic Nennish name *neney nenet's* ("real person") is found predominantly to the east of the Ob', to some extent on its lower reaches, and also on the Yamal."[40] The Chukchi, notwithstanding the cultural division between the maritime hunters and the hunter-herders, call themselves "those of genuine language" or "genuine men."[41] In Canada, the situation is similar. The Beaver Indians of northeastern British Columbia, for example, call themselves Dunne-za which means "Real People."[42]

Aboriginal political identity, however, was not derived solely from kinship; it was also derived from the relationship between indigenous peoples and nature. "In tribal societies human beings live closely with each other in conditions of co-presence [i.e., face-to-face societies] and within the rhythms of nature in their day-to-day conduct, but they also integrate the natural world cognitively with their activities. . . . [H]uman social organization . . . has . . . symmetry with nature."[43] Reflecting this intimate relationship between social existence and nature, the Blackfoot people, for example, were called the "Sakoyitapix," the "prairie people," as well as "Nitsitapix," the "real people."[44] The Okanagan Indians call themselves "skiluxw," "people," but their present-day name means "'head of the river,' in reference to the farthest point that salmon could ascend the Okanagan system. . . ."[45] It is important to emphasize again the fundamentally existential nature of aboriginal political identity.

It is also important to emphasize that aboriginal peoples were not nations in the European sense. In the case of the northern Algonkian peoples, Brown asserts, Europeans "discovered, no 'nations' of European type in these regions--no over-arching political structures with hierarchies of power and authority. Europeans were fond of applying the term 'nation' to Indian groups, reflecting the inevitable ethnocentrism of both their perceptions and their vocabulary . . ."[46] Instead, aboriginal political identity was shaped by kinship and by an intimate relationship with nature.

Together, kinship-based political organization and identities, shaped by nomadism and subsistence economies, account, to a significant extent, for the anarchical nature of aboriginal political communities. To repeat, government is that institution, no matter how rudimentary, which makes authoritative and binding decisions for a political community. Everyday life, however, did not demand that decision making take place or that leadership be exercised, on a frequent and regular basis. Most of the time bands of extended families foraged across territories that, if not fixed, were mutually recognized by other bands. Instead of government, tradition and mutual understanding regulated daily life. Among the Naskapi, "One may account for the lack of government . . . by visualizing the sparsity of the population and its scattered manner of living in family groups."[47] On the other side of Canada, "the informality of daily living and the required seasonal movements," among the Okanagan fishers and hunters, "mitigated [sic] against the formalizing of power."[48]

Moreover, when decisions were made that affected the well-being of an aboriginal community, whether at the level of the band or that of the tribe, they were accomplished by consensus and typically on an informal basis.[49] Decisions were not made authoritatively. "Within the northern Indian group," for example, "there is little role differentiation involved in the process of making and implementing decisions. This holds equally for Algonkians and Athapaskans. It is through the achievement of consensus that the body of responsible adult males functions as the policy-making group."[50] Even in the case of the Iroquoian people, who are supposedly the standard example of Indian government because of the Confederacy, did not make decisions in an authoritative manner. Commenting on Iroquoian decision making, Druke notes: "Decisions in council were generally made by consensus. No one was bound by a decision, however, although social pressure acted to induce acceptance of decisions made."[51] The distinction between authority and influence in politics is pivotal. Communities in which decisions are made authoritatively, and thus are binding, possess government; communities in which decisions are made by consensus and influence, and thus are voluntary, do not.

Leadership, manifest in the position of the chief, too, was central to defining the anarchical nature of aboriginal politics. Leadership in aboriginal communities was usually temporary and limited to a particular task or collective goal. For northern Athapaskan peoples, Coates writes "Leadership remained vaguely defined, varying according to the tasks involved and the skills of the men in the group. Often one man functioned as the trading chief while another led the band during hunting expeditions."[52] In some communities, the position of a chief was hereditary, although this principle was often contingent upon his personal merit. In other communities, the position was held solely on the basis of recognition by community members of the exemplary qualities or skills of an individual. Moreover, the exercise of leadership lasted no longer than the time required to accomplish the task itself. The transitory nature of leadership in aboriginal communities is exemplified by the Evenk of eastern Siberia.

> [T]he original Tungus [Evenk] organization had no position of hereditary chief: when the clan needed a head for certain purposes a clan meeting was held to appoint some one to act as head of the clan. Sometimes the right person could be selected without any clan meeting--when the clan was in trouble the most experienced and intelligent person usually became head. If such a person could not act at a moment of need his place was taken by another person.[53]

Notwithstanding different selection practices, chiefs did not possess authority or the right of command. Leadership depended upon voluntary following. In regards to the Okanagan, "A chief was followed because of his attributes and did not have power to force people to do his will."[54] In the case of the Mi'kmaq, "a chief could attract followers, but they did what they pleased and were not subordinated to their leader's will, except perhaps to a limited extent in time of war."[55] This is not to say that chiefs were devoid of any power. But, power in aboriginal communities was neither concentrated nor authoritative. "In those societies, resources were available to all, and personal abilities translated into influence rather than coercive authority."[56] Chiefs, therefore, could lead only in so far as they were able to persuade others either through word or by deed. "Band chiefs led by virtue of their wisdom or success in the hunt and required the support and respect of the people. Decisions were made by consensus, the chief hoping to persuade others through oratory and example rather than by direct orders."[57] It is no surprise that in many indigenous cultures, the position of chief is equated with being a good speaker. Chiefs were leaders, not rulers.

Thus, aboriginal political communities were marked by decision making that was neither institutionalized, nor binding, and by leadership that possessed influence, not authority. But, politics existed, even if government did not. In his quest to understand the politics of local-level communities, such as tribes and villages, Swartz rejects Easton's definition of politics as the "authoritative allocation of values" because of its structural-functionalist assumption of "politics as what 'governments' do."[58] Instead, in a non-functionalist spirit, Swartz defines politics as those "events which are involved in the determination and implementation of public goals and/or the differential distribution and use of power within the group or groups concerned with the goals being considered."[59] This definition of politics makes no *a priori* assumptions about the existence of any institutions, including government; government is but one medium through which politics can take place. As anthropologists have frequently pointed out: "In bands and tribes, the political order, or **polity**, is not a separate entity but is submerged in the total social order. It is difficult to characterize an act or event as political rather than merely social."[60]

As one might expect, politics was very different in societies that did not have government, and kinship almost invariably played a central role. In the case of the Inuit, Riches argues that "Neither leaders nor followers were subject to sanctions specifically connected with their roles . . . only within the altruistic ambience of kinship might their proper behaviour be effectively sustained."[61] In the absence of authority, social control and kinship obligations were maintained through diffuse sanctions, for example, treating the "stingy," "stingily," or in the case of serious transgressions, threatening individuals with ostracism or sorcery.[62] Even in the case of the murder, kinship served as the means for retribution. Among the Chukchi, the murderer sometimes was expected to compensate the relatives of the victim. Bogoras cites the case of "a rich reindeer-breeder on the western Kolyma tundra, Qitu'wgi, who happened to murder his wife, had to pay a heavy fine to the brother of the one killed. He gave nine reindeer, among them two driving-teams and a number of the best fawn-skins." In other cases, retribution was exacted through blood-revenge by kin members of the victim.[63]

Although kinship was usually the medium for politics, it was *not* the "functional" equivalent for government. Government often resolves conflict within a political community by enforcing a decision, through coercion if necessary, upon conflicting groups. The reality in bands and tribes was quite different. A council was sometimes called to resolve controversial issues that affected the band or tribe. However, if a consensus could not be achieved, the issue remained unresolved.[64] This, in turn, meant that serious friction might persist among band members. In the event that the dispute was beyond reconciliation, dissenting factions either joined another band or struck out on their own. Commenting on the Plains Cree, Mandelbaum writes "A family which, for some reason, was dissatisfied with its neighbors, went to camp with relatives in another band."[65] Thus, band and tribe unity was a contingent, not a functional, aspect of aboriginal political life.

Politics was also manifested in the external relations of aboriginal communities. Even among those peoples who were the most nomadic and who spent most of the year in bands of one or two families, politics came to the fore during times of external threat. "Without question many groups are political in their foundation . . . but others are relatively free from this at least until outside challenge brings continued existence to the level of purposive striving that is here designated a goal."[66] Above all else, the very act of collective action to ensure the survival of a band or tribe against external aggression (for example, wars between the Cree and Blackfoot or between the Chukchi and Yukagir) defined that community as a *political* community. But, even in warfare, the most extreme form of politics, anarchical politics often prevailed. Unlike the European soldier, for example, who was subject to a strict line of authority, "in the eastern woodlands, the warrior--in Iroquoian terms, the bearer of the bones of the nation, a responsibility that included the duty to fight for it--was his own man, to the point of being able to quit a war party without losing face should he feel called on to do so."[67] Further, the Iroquois Confederacy, although clearly a form of political organization, was not an instance of government. "What made the League effective was not its ability to centralize power and communicate authority to the margins, in which it failed miserably, but the consensus not to feud among the Five Nations. ..."[68] Even here, politics by consensus existed, but government by authority did not.

Most of the original peoples of Canada and Russia were anarchical political communities, but not all. This analysis does not apply, nor is it intended to apply, to peoples such as the Sakha (Yakut) or the Buryat of Siberia who were also original to Siberia. The Sakha, for instance, raised horses and cattle and possessed hierarchical social and political relations. Some suggest that the Sakha and Buryat could even be called feudal societies. Whatever the case, they clearly were not egalitarian, hunter-gatherer societies and, thus, were not indigenous peoples in the sense of the term used here.

The Indians of the Northwest Coast, however, were somewhat atypical. As Dickason notes, most aboriginal peoples of Canada had egalitarian social organization, "with the exception of some aspects of the chiefdoms of the Northwest Coast, the only area in Canada where that type of social organization developed. . . ."[69] In contrast to bands and tribes, chiefdoms are marked by clear social and political inequality, often on the basis of status ranks. Chiefdoms have relatively permanent central agencies of coordination, based on the collection and redistribution of an economic surplus.[70] In addition, the position of chief is typically hereditary and carries with it authority or the right of command. The degree and the scope of this authority varies: in some communities the power of a chief is quite extensive, including the power of life or death over community members; in other communities, the power of a chief is much more limited.

In contrast to the chiefdoms of the South Pacific, however, the chiefdoms of the Northwest Coast shared many features with neighbouring bands and tribes. To be sure, the Northwest Coast were rank societies and these ranks bestowed certain privileges on chiefs or "nobles" not shared by others. "Thus among the Nootka the chief or senior 'noble' of several local settlements had certain prior rights to the salmon streams and ocean waters for fish and sea mammals. . . ."[71] But, neither was ranking highly restrictive. Among the Kwakiutl, for instance, "out of a population of about 1,500 individuals, there were 650 named positions, some of which were held by more than one person at the same time."[72] And, without question, the highest ranking chief of a village had some authority not enjoyed by others. But, this authority was not absolute and social control usually took the form of diffuse sanctions as practised in bands and tribes. Finally, regarding the question of redistribution, potlatch-givers depended heavily upon kin to help provide goods to be distributed (as no one was wealthy enough to provide a potlatch by themselves) and those invited were expected to reciprocate. Thus, argues Lewellen, the potlatch "suggests a system of reciprocity, common to bands and tribes, rather than the centralized redistribution that supposedly defines the quality of chiefdoms."[73] Given these ambiguities, Barclay concludes, "Northwest Coast societies seem to represent cases of marginal anarchy. . . ."[74]

Anarchies Sustained: Aboriginal Peoples Following Contact

In the sixteenth century, however, aboriginal political life was confronted by a formidable challenge. In 1534, Jacques Cartier voyaged up the St. Lawrence River marking the beginning of sustained contact in Canada between aboriginal and European peoples. In 1581, Ermak Timofeyevich crossed the Ural Mountains marking the start of sustained relations between the peoples of northern Asia and those of European Russia.[75] In North America, Europeans first returned for the rich fish stocks of the North Atlantic. However, it was not long until Europeans began their expansions across both continents in quest of furs--the British and French westward across North America, the Russians eastward across Siberia. (The histories of these expansions have been well documented and are not the subject of discussion here.[76]) In the process, aboriginal peoples experienced enormous changes in their lives. Europeans introduced new technologies, such as steel axes and firearms, as well as Western belief systems such as Christianity. They also brought disease. In Siberia, during the seventeenth century, aboriginal peoples experienced populations losses in the order 30 to 40 percent.[77] The Yukagir population, alone, fell from 4,500 to 1,500, mainly as a result of small pox.[78] Population losses in Canada were of a similar order. Moreover, European markets altered subsistence patterns within aboriginal communities, and changed trading relations among aboriginal peoples themselves. Other significant changes occurred, as well. The development of a horse culture among the Plains peoples in the eighteenth century was a direct consequence of European influence that, incidentally, preceded European contact. European pressure on wild reindeer led to the transition of hunters into herders on the Siberian tundra: "In the eighteenth century, as wild reindeer populations diminished, pastoralism became the prevalent form of inland tundra economy, and the majority of the Nenets, tundra Chukchi, Even, and tundra Koriak became full-time herders."[79] Finally, European contact led to a number of territorial changes among aboriginal peoples. The Cree, to highlight one example, who were hunter-gatherers of the boreal forest, from northern Quebec to northern Manitoba, pushed westward as far as northeastern British Columbia as a result of the fur trade, and eventually a number of these Cree adopted a Plains way of life.

There were important differences, however, between Canada and Russia during the fur trade period. In Canada, as throughout North America, the fur trade was one of mutual exchange. Indian peoples traded on a voluntary basis, and while there is ample evidence that exchanges were not always equitable, especially for Indians, there is also evidence that many Indians were skilled negotiators and were often able to obtain favourable returns for their furs. By the end of the fur trade period, Europeans in Canada had managed to cross the continent to the Pacific and maintained their presence through the construction of a series of forts in strategic locations. By contrast, in Russia, the fur trade was less of a trade than the coercive extraction of furs from indigenous peoples. Like the French and the British in Canada, the Russians constructed a series of forts called *ostrogs* along strategic waterways across Siberia. These forts served as collection points of *yasak*, which was a tribute imposed on aboriginal peoples to be paid in furs (primarily sable). To ensure the collection of furs, hostages were often taken and held in the forts until the tribute was paid. Communities that refused to pay *yasak* were subject to military force. These differences in the treatment of indigenous people in the fur trade reflected broader economic differences between Western and Eastern Europe. While trade, exchange and market relations were growing in

Western Europe, feudalism and serfdom showed no signs of waning in Russia.

Despite these differences in the structure of relations in the fur trade, there were critical similarities. Most importantly, state policy afforded considerable autonomy within aboriginal communities, while encouraging change in aboriginal ways of life. Even the 1822 Statute of Alien Administration in Siberia, the primary official document of late-Imperial Russia regulating aboriginal-state relations, reflected this reality. "The emphasis on gradual and voluntary change was the most important feature of the document. . . . For the peoples covered by the statute this meant almost total cultural and administrative autonomy."[80] One explanation for the relative non-interference in aboriginal communities is that, since aboriginal peoples were the primary producers of furs, it was better to leave a good thing alone. In Canada, Wotherspoon and Satzewich write:

> [the fur trade] was a period of comparative laissez-faire with respect to the aboriginal way of life. While relations of dependence and subordination emerged during the course of the fur trade, in part because of Indian people's reliance on European commodities, some anthropologists and historians nevertheless suggest that this was a period of "non-directed cultural change." Aboriginal lifestyles were central to the economic reproduction of the fur trade, and Europeans generally did not want to tamper with a successful system of commodity production.[81]

Colonial and absolutist states, moreover, pursued a paternalistic policy of protection from the increasingly dominant European peoples. In Russia, for example, the "yasak people" were to be "protected from Russian 'thievery' (violation of the tsar's decrees) and corrupting vices. No tobacco or liquor were to be sold; no gambling was allowed; and no 'insults' (obidy) of any kind were to be tolerated. The Russian people were to stay away from the iasak people. . . ."[82] Thus, during the first three centuries of sustained contact between European and aboriginal peoples, that is, before modern state-building, the anarchical nature of aboriginal political communities endured.

While economic factors were no doubt important in the formulation of state policy, another explanation can be found in the nature of colonial and absolutist regimes themselves. In contrast to the modern states that were to succeed them, colonial and absolutist states had frontiers, not borders. According to Giddens, frontiers within a state can be classified in two ways:

> "Primary settlement frontiers" are those involved where a state is expanding outwards into a territory previously either having no in habitants, or populated by tribal communities. "Secondary settlement frontiers" are those within the territory of a state only sparsely inhabited for one reason or another--usually because of the infertile soil of the land or because of the inhospitality of the terrain. In all cases, "frontier" refer to an area on the peripheral regions of a state (not necessarily adjoining another state) in which political authority of the centre is diffuse or thinly spread.[83]

Borders, on the other hand, are precisely demarcated boundaries, the territory encompassed by which is subject to a high level of surveillance and internal pacification by the political administration.

The distinction between borders and frontiers is crucial to understanding aboriginal political life prior to modern state-building. Unlike their modern state successors, British North America and Tsarist Russia tolerated a plurality of ways of life on the social, cultural, and political frontiers of the state and, thus, the autonomy of aboriginal peoples. For that matter, these states did not have the administrative capacities to do otherwise. The notion of the "frontier" in British North America was captured not only by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which "reserved" lands for Indians that were not the territory of extant colonies, but also by the very existence of Rupert's Land, a massive territory owned and administered by the Hudson's Bay Company. In Russia, there were some areas, such as Chuktoka, over which the Tsarist state claimed domination, but were never conquered, let alone colonized. Moreover, even in an otherwise repressive regime as Tsarist Russia, aboriginal peoples were often not subject to the same laws as were Russians. The case of murder poignantly highlights the difference: "Thus, a native murderer had to compensate the relatives but remained alive, whereas a Russian for a similar crime was condemned to die."[84]

The colonial and absolutist regimes in Canada and Russia would increasingly become involved in the lives of aboriginal peoples up to the modern state building period, especially with the expansion of settler populations in the development of agriculture. Nevertheless, aboriginal peoples largely remained self-determining. In fact, during the century prior to modern state building, Milloy argues indigenous peoples in Canada were self-determining: "in the period in which the British imperial government was responsible for Indian Affairs, from 1763 to 1860 when that responsibility was transferred to the government of the United Canadas, Indian tribes were de facto, self-[determining]."[85] This, however, should not be surprising: for thousands of years indigenous peoples throughout the world have coexisted alongside hierarchically organized political communities.

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[1] Frank Cassidy and Robert L. Bish, *Indian Government: Its Meaning in Practice* (Lantzville, B.C.: Oolichan Books, 1989), 3.

[2] While there is some debate among anthropologists as to the number of distinct aboriginal languages in each country, most identify Abenaki, Delaware, Potawatomi, Malecite, Micmac, Cree, Montagnais-Naskapi, Ojibwa, Blackfoot, Tagish, Sarcee, Han, Sekani, Kaska, Beaver, Hare, Dogrib, Chilcotin, Tahltan, Tutchone, Slave, Kutchin, Carrier, Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Inupik, Haida, Tlingit, Onandaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, Mohawk, Tuscarora, Kutenai, Lillooet, Okanagan, Thompson, Shuswap, Sechelt, Squamish, Straits, Bella Coola, Comox, Halkomelem, Songish, Semiahmo, Cowichan, Pentlatch, Dakota, Assiniboine, Southern Tsimshian, Nass-Gitksan, Haisla, Heiltsuk, Kwakwala, Nitinat, Nootka as the main indigenous languages of Canada (see C. Roderick Wilson and Carl Urion, "First Nations Prehistory and Canadian History," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, 2nd ed. [Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995], 29-30; Alan D. McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*, 2nd ed. [Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 1995], 3-7), and most identify Saami, Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Enets, Sel'kup, Nganasan, Dolgan, Ket, Evenk, Even, Yukagir, Chuvan, Chukchi, Koriak, Itel'men, Eskimo, Aleut, Nivkh, Negidal, Nanai, Ul'ch, Oroch, Orok, Udege, and Tofalar as the main indigenous languages of Russia (see James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581-1990* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992]; Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994], 1).

[3] See *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995); Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992), 63-76.

[4] Mary Druke Becker, "Iroquois and Iroquoian in Canada," in *The Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1986), 305.

[5] Ibid., 327.

[6] William N. Fenton, "The Iroquois in History," in *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy Oestreich Lurie (New York: Random House, 1971), 135.

[7] Viriginia P. Miller, "The Micmac: A Maritime Woodland Group," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1986), 355.

[8] Dickason,*Canada's First Nations*, 63.

[9] Douglas Hudson and C. Roderick Wilson, "The Plateau - A Regional Overview," in *The Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1986), 439.

[10] In 1808, for instance, the explorer Simon Fraser encountered a community of 1,200 Thompson Indians at the confluence of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers. See Alan McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*, 169.

[11] Ibid., 171.

[12] June Helm and Eleanor Leacock note that the "aboriginal population density among Canadian hunters [taiga region] is estimated at 1.35 per 100 square kilometers; for the Eskimo it was 4.02, and it reached 43.3 in aboriginal California [similar to densities on the Northwest Coast] ("The Hunting Tribes of Subartic Canada," in *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy Oestreich Lurie [New York: Random House, 1971], 370-71)."

[13] David Riches, *Northern Nomadic Hunter-Gatherers: A Humanistic Approach* (London: Acedemic Press, 1982), 17. See also June Helm and Elanor Leacock, "The Hunting Tribes of Subarctic Canada," 347.

[14] Igor Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations: Native Whalers and Reindeer Herders of Northern Eurasia* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), 9.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations*, 162.

[17] Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 5.

[18] Krupnik estimates the population density of the Eskimos of the Chukchi Peninsula was a staggering 1.2 to 1.4 per square kilometer, whereas that of the inland Chukchi was 0.008 to 0.013 (Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations*, 97).

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[19] Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 132.

[20] Ted C. Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, 2d. ed. (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1992), 4.

[21] Frank G. Speck, *Naskapi: the Savage Hunters of the Labrador Peninsula*, new ed. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 5. See also Eleanor Leacock for a similar view, "The Montagnais-Naskapi of the Labrador," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, 2nd ed., 165-66.

[22] S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* (Oosterhout: Anthropological Publications, 1966), 192.

[23] Further, a jursidiction can be self-governing without being self-determining: the debate over public, local self-government in Russia is contemporary example.

[24] Lewellen, *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, 1.

[25] Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), p. 111. For other seminal discussions of politics in band and tribal societies see *Politics and History in Band Societies*, ed. Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Harold Barclay, *People Without Government* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1982), Morton H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York: Random House Inc., 1967), *Tribes Without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems*, ed. John Middleton and David Tait (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1958), Max Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965), *Politics and Society: Studies in Comparative Political Sociology*, ed. Eric A. Nordlinger (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1987).

[26] Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, 32.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Diamond Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1963), 122.

[29] Ken S. Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 6.

[30] See Service, *Primitive Social Organization*, 65-66.

[31] McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*, 172.

[32] Ibid., 145.

[33] Mary Druke Becker, "Farmers and Hunters of the Eastern Woodlands: A Regional Overview," in *The Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, 319.

[34] Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 132.

[35] G. M. Vasilevich and A. V. Smolyak, "The Evenks," in *The Peoples of Siberia*, ed. M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 644.

[36] Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, 50.

[37] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 100. Italics are mine.

[38] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

[39] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 117.

[40] E. D. Prokof'yeva, "The Nentsy," in *The Peoples of Siberia*, eds. M. G. Levin and L. P. Potapov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 547. Italics are mine.

[41] *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, ed. Franz Boas (Leiden: E. J. Brill Ltd., 1909), 11.

[42] Robin Ridington, "Freedom and Authority: Teachings of the Hunters," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, 233.

[43] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 194-97.

[44] Hugh A. Dempsey, "The Blackfoot Indians," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson. 2d. ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995), 385.

[45] Douglas Hudson, "The Okanagan Indians," in *The Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1986), 484.

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[46] Jennifer Brown, "Northern Algonquians from Lake Superior and Hudson Bay to Manitoba in the Historic Period," in *Native Peoples: the Canadian Experience*, 212. Laura Peers (*The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780-1870* [Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1994], 24) echoes this view: "Unlike the European idea of 'nation,' for instance, the Ojibwa had no formal political institutions linking their scattered villages."

[47] Speck, *Naskapi*, 6.

[48] Hudson, "The Okanagan Indians," 452.

[49] There are a number of reasons that suggest most aboriginal peoples did make decisions by consensus. First, the records of the Jesuits' first encounters with aboriginal peoples indicate the absence of the institution of a chief with authoritative powers. Second, a number of aboriginal languages do not possess a word for government. Third, my own research among the Metis of northern Alberta and the Evenk of eastern Siberia included discussions with aboriginal elders about decision making processes. They invariably stated that community decision making was rare, and that most of the time decisions were arrived at through mutual understanding between the specific parties concerned. For example, who fished and hunted where often was arrived at my mutual consideration and family tradition, not by the broader community. Moreover, most of the year many aboriginal peoples travelled in groups of one or two families, which did not require formal decision making institutions.

[50] Helm and Leacock, "The Hunting Tribes of Subarctic Canada," 367.

[51] Druke Becker, "Iroquois and Iroquoian in Canada," 305.

[52] Coates, *Best Left as Indians*, 6.

[53] Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, 192.

[54] Hudson, "The Okanagan Indians," 452.

[55] Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 45.

[56] Ibid., 43.

[57] Alan McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*, 145.

[58] Marc J. Swartz, "Introduction," in *Local-Level Politics*, ed. Marc J. Swartz (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), 4. Swartz further contends "This is not to say that structural considerations have no place in the study of politics. The point is that the presence of 'government' or any other particular structure is not a definitional attribute of politics. Although politics, being a social activity, belongs to the universe of interpersonal relations, the degree of institutionalization of these relations, their permanence and resilience, as well how central they are to understanding political phenomena are all matters to be established empirically. . . . " (p. 2).

[59] Ibid., 1

[60] Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 242.

[61] Riches, *Northern Nomadic Hunter-Gatherers*, 65.

[62] Ibid, 66; Anastasia M. Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger than Love: the Destruction of an Ojibwa Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 95-99.

[63] W. Bogoras, *The Chukchee* (1904-1909; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970), 664.

[64] See Catherine Price, "Lakotas and Euroamerican: Contrasted Concepts of 'Chieftainship' and Decision-Making Authority," *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 3 (summer 1994): 447-463.

[65] David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1979), 105.

[66] Swartz, "Introduction," 5.

[67] Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 46.

[68] Fenton, "The Iroquois in History," 139.

[69] Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 66.

[70] Service, *Primitive Social Organization*, 144; Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, 37.

[71] Barclay, *People Without Government*, 49.

[72] Lewellen, *Political Anthropology*, 39.

[73] Ibid., 40.

[74] Barclay, *Peoples Without Government*, 49.

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[75] This, of course, does not represent the first European contacts with North America or Asia. About 1000 A.D., the Norse became the first known Europeans to make contact with North America; in the same century, the Novgorodians made pioneering contacts with the peoples of Asia across the northern Urals. Moreover, "first contact" between aboriginal peoples and Europeans was an uneven process. As late as 1918, for instance, there were still Inuit in the Northwest Territories who had never met a white person, and the existence of whom was still unknown to the Canadian state (Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 86).

[76] See *The Development of Siberia: People and Resources*, ed. Alan Wood and R. A. French (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989).

[77] Gail Fondahl, "Siberia: Native peoples and newcomers," in *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, ed. Ian Bremmer and Ray Tara (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 484.

[78] Selzkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 27.

[79] Ibid., 4.

[80] Ibid., 83.

[81] Vic Satzewich and Terry Wotherspoon, *First Nations: Race, Class, and Gender Relations* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1993), 9.

[82] Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 31.

[83] Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 50.

[84] George V. Lantzeff, *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of Colonial Administration* (New York: Octagonal Books, 1972), 100.

[85] John S. Milloy, "The Early Indian Acts," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada*, ed. J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 146.

CHAPTER THREE
The Great Transformation

Modern state-building irrevocably changed aboriginal political life. In the process, peoples without government were transformed into peoples *with* government. Under absolutist and colonial regimes aboriginal peoples could coexist as autonomous, anarchical political communities. Under modern states, this was no longer the case. The modern states which emerged in Canada, following Confederation, and in Russia, following the Bolshevik Revolution, possessed a universalizing political logic which compelled the state to pursue assimilationist policies toward the indigenous peoples living under its domain, unlike their predecessors. Among other measures, the state in both countries banned aboriginal spiritual practices and established residential school systems. The aim of these policies was to eliminate aboriginal ways of life and to incorporate aboriginal people into the fabric of the dominant state and society. However, the particular path of modern state building in Canada and Russia, namely, the creation of federal states, led to contradictory segregationist policies. Notably the state created territorial-administrative units for aboriginal peoples in the form of reserves and Native soviets. Crucially, the course of aboriginal political development resulting from these contradictory policies created the foundations of contemporary struggles for aboriginal self-government.

Some scholars reject the argument that modern state-building led to the transformation of aboriginal-state relations and, as a result, to the transformation of aboriginal political communities. Milloy suggests that "the events of nation-building are largely irrelevant . . ."[1] Instead, Rowley argues that the policies pursued by the state toward aboriginal peoples in Western countries (such as Canada, Australia, and the United States) constitute a form of cultural imperialism. As such these policies cut across the events of modern state-building.[2] Other scholars see continuity in aboriginal policy as a result of capitalist imperialism. There are a few scholars who recognize a change in the policies of dominant societies toward aboriginal peoples as a result of economic forces. Wotherspoon and Satzewich, for instance, argue that the shift from mercantile to industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century changed aboriginal-European relations in Canada, ending the period of comparative laissez-faire with respect to the aboriginal way of life.[3] All of these perspectives are mistaken.

Through a comparative historical analysis of Canada and Russia, this chapter argues that modern state-building, not capitalism or Western cultural imperialism, is the critical historical factor explaining the transformation of aboriginal political life. The chapter first outlines the main features of the modern state. It then compares consequences of modern state-building in Canada and Russia for aboriginal political development. Finally, the chapter contrasts the course of aboriginal political development in Canada and Russia with that of indigenous peoples in Norway and Japan. Federal state-building in Canada and Russia led to assimilationist and segregationist policies toward aboriginal peoples. In contrast, unitary state-building in Japan and Norway led to strictly assimilationist policies. As a consequence, in Canada and Russia, struggles for self-government exist, whereas in Norway and Japan, they do not.

The Modern State

The sixteenth century witnessed the rise of capitalism; the nineteenth century, the rise of the modern state. While the impact of capitalism was felt globally by the nineteenth century, it had yet to become universally rooted as the dominant form of economic organization. In Russia, for example, where serfs were not emancipated by law until 1861 (and in practice, arguably, not ever), the roots of capitalism were very tender indeed. The modern state emerged much later than capitalism; however, its impact cut across countries regardless of whether they pursued capitalist or non-capitalist paths of economic development. To be sure, important differences existed between the polities of state-socialist and capitalist countries. The observance of political rights is an excellent example. Regardless of their form of economic organization, modern states were remarkably similar in a number of other important ways.

The notion that liberal democratic and authoritarian regimes may share critical similarities is not new. But, the conventional approach to the comparative study of democratic and authoritarian regimes is to accentuate, and to account for, their differences. Challenging convention, Huntington declares

> The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government. The differences between democracy and dictatorship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities. Communist totalitarian states and Western liberal states both belong generally in the category of effective rather than debile political systems.[4]

While one need not agree with all of the tenets of Huntington's thesis, his basic argument is hard to dismiss: autonomous and effective political orders share common features. And, although Huntington did not specifically use the term state, his argument has not been lost by scholars who adopt a state-centric approach. In *States and Social Revolutions*, for example, Theda Skocpol cogently demonstrates important commonalities among the modern states that emerged after revolutions in France, Russia and China, despite economic and ideological differences. In a similar vein, this chapter argues that Canada and Soviet Russia, shared critical similarities as modern states, similarities that would have colossal consequences for aboriginal peoples.

Defining Elements

At the end of eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, the modern state was created primarily for the purpose of successfully waging war. Tilly argues that states carry out the following activities: war making: eliminating or neutralizing external enemies; state making: eliminating or neutralizing internal enemies; protection: eliminating or neutralizing enemies of friends; and, extraction: acquiring the means to carry out the first three activities.[5] The modern state is unparalleled in its capacities to pursue these activities. Commenting on the difference between the modern or nation-state and the traditional states, Giddens notes "All traditional states have laid claim to the formalized monopoly over the means of violence within their territories. But it is only within nation-states that this claim characteristically becomes more or less successful."[6] The modern state possesses both a universalizing political logic and the capacities to pursue this logic that no predeceasing form of political organization, including colonial and absolutist states, did. The modern state can be characterized by the following elements: sovereignty, borders, bureaucracy, universal citizenship, nationalism, centralization, internal pacification, and a universalizing ideology. While the origins of some of these elements can be found in absolutist states, together they are found only in the modern state.

Sovereignty refers to the exclusive right of command over a territory by a political organization, as well as to the impersonal basis of that authority. The ultimacy of sovereignty is captured in Schmitt's aphorism: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception."[7] For Schmitt, the exception is a condition of emergency in which the sovereign acts with unlimited authority, unconstrained by law, in order to preserve its rule. "In such a situation it is clear that the state remains, whereas law recedes."[8]

> Therein resides the essence of the state's sovereignty, which must be juristically defined correctly, not as the monopoly to coerce or to rule, but as the monopoly to decide. The exception reveals most clearly the essence of the state's authority. The decision parts here from the legal norm, and (to formulate it paradoxically) authority proves that to produce law it need not be based on law.[9]

Thus, sovereignty does not emanate from law; it precedes law.[10] To be sovereign, is to be able to decide on political action beyond the legal order itself, and to decide when the legal order can and must be suspended in order to maintain rule. The achievement of state sovereignty is very modern. As Poggi notes, "it is a feature of the nineteenth-century state that each operates in its own territory as the sole, exclusive fount of all powers and prerogatives of rule. This attainment of unitary internal sovereignty (in some places achieved under absolutism), after centuries of development in this direction, is an outstanding characteristic of the constitutional state of the nineteenth century."[11] Moreover, for a modern state, the existence of "other," autonomous, political communities is inimical to unitary internal sovereignty.

The notion of borders is linked to the concept of sovereignty. As discussed in the previous chapter, modern states have borders, not frontiers. This distinction is crucial. The boundaries of frontiers can be internal to the state itself, or external vis a vis another state. Not only are geographical demarcations ill-defined, but so, too, are the political and social spheres. Moreover, in frontier areas, the political authority of the centre is diffuse or thinly spread. By contrast, borders are precisely demarcated boundaries--geographical, social, and political--the territory encompassed by which is subject to a high level of surveillance and internal pacification by the political administration. Not surprisingly, the ideal typical modern state is a unitary state, that is, one without internal borders: federal states represent a major deviation from this rule.[12]

The modern state also enjoys a high degree of internal pacification. Internal pacification refers both to the ability to police successfully the activities across the entire territorial expanse of the state so that violence is no longer an ever-present facet of life, as well as to the capacity of the state to maintain surveillance over the totality of the social activities within the state.[13] The ability of the state to accomplish internal pacification is possible because of the rapid advancements in communication and transportation technologies and of the development of modern bureaucracy. The modern state is the Weberian bureaucratic state and is "institutionalized in the form of a political and administrative machine run by civil servants recruited on an impersonal basis according to meritocratic criteria . . ."[14] The modern bureaucracy is unprecedented in terms of organizational power and efficiency. The bureaucratic state can maintain almost unlimited information on virtually all relevant social, economic, and political activities, and is manifest in the creation of state departments of statistics. Importantly, internal pacification and bureaucracy help create the foundation for the much more centralized, autonomous, modern state.

Universal citizenship, nationalism, and a universalizing ideology are three elements particular only to the modern state. Nationalism, Anderson astutely observes, is not really an ideology as is liberalism or fascism. Instead, Anderson suggests that it is more fruitful analytically to think on nationalism in the same term as kinship and religion.[15] Nationalism is derived, of course, from the concept of nation, which Anderson defines as "an imagined political community--and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[16] In this regard, the nation is radically different from face-to-face indigenous political communities. The nation is also very different from political communities in feudal and absolutist states. "The earlier, dynastic states in Europe placed few demands on the majority of their citizens, and they did not require cultural uniformity in society. It did not matter that serfs spoke a different language from that of the rulers, or that the serfs in one region spoke a different language from those in another region."[17] Nationalism, however, changed this and, in the process, turned "'peasants into Frenchmen'."[18] This imagined political community offered fraternity regardless of extant social inequalities. At the same time, the nation demanded uniformity and a universal commitment by all its members, including the ultimate sacrifice of life for the nation.

The nation and nationalism, products of the French Revolution, demanded new political relations within the modern state, and these new political relations were manifest in the notion of universal citizenship. "Citizenship describes the rights and obligations associated with membership in a social unit, and notably with nationality."[19] Thus, while universal citizenship provides certain entitlements universally across the population, it also demands universal and unitary participation in the modern political community. The nature of these entitlements varies significantly with the particular regime of a state. Liberal democracies promote political and civil rights, for instance, whereas state socialist regimes promote economic rights "in combination with the severe curtailment of political and civil rights.[20]

Finally, modern states possess universalizing ideologies. The term ideology, itself, is very modern and was coined only in 1796. It is easy to imagine the uncompromising, universal application of ideologies such as Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union or Cuba; but the modern democracies of the West, exemplified in the United States, are no more compromising in the universal application of liberalism. Only now, for example, is there serious debate on the question of group versus individual rights, albeit largely within academic circles.

Together, nationalism, universal citizenship, and universalizing ideologies fostered a universalizing political logic, a logic which a sovereign, centralized, bureaucratic state had the capacities to pursue.

Canada and Soviet Russia

The creation of modern states in Canada and Russia occurred under very different circumstances and took very different forms. In Russia, a totalitarian Soviet state was created in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917. In Canada, a liberal-democratic state emerged from an evolutionary process, but its origins can be marked by Confederation of 1867. Moreover, in both countries, despite the creation of modern states, many of the cultural, economic, and political features of the "old" regimes persisted. For instance, Russia remained a non-capitalist country after the Revolution, and Canada remained a capitalist country after Confederation. As well, Russia, before and after the Revolution, was non-democratic, whereas Canada continued its democratic traditions.[21]

Nevertheless, despite stark and well-known differences between the respective social and political systems, the essential characteristics of the modern state were shared by both countries.[22] The modern states that emerged in Canada and Russia were more centralized, bureaucratic, and autonomously powerful than their colonial and absolutist predecessors.[23] These newly created capacities were manifest, for example, in the state's "extraction" activities. The Soviet Russian state succeeded at great human cost in pursuing a strategy of rapid industrial development in the 1930s, squeezing the countryside in the process, in order to meet the external exigencies of politico-military competition. The Canadian state also exerted its power in the economy through its concerted effort, initiated by the creation of the Canadian National Railways, to develop public enterprise in a capitalist economy. "The politics that introduced public enterprise across Canada," argues Perl, "contained a new expression of national economic sovereignty, one that was made possible by an increase in state autonomy and a strengthened state capacity that were sufficient to redirect the course of Canada's industrial development."[24]

In a critical way, however, modern state-building in Canada and Russia deviated from the ideal typical model: both were federal states. Federal states are aberrant because they divide sovereignty between national and sub-national territorial-administrative political orders. As a consequence of this division, a political culture often develops which acknowledges degrees of political autonomy for sub-national communities on a territorial or an ethnic-territorial basis. This political culture is evident in Canada. However, some have argued that the RSFSR and the USSR were federal in form, but unitary in content. Because the Soviet regime was authoritarian, it is argued that the federal organization of the Soviet state was largely irrelevant. In her seminal article, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR," Rakowska-Harmstone cogently challenges this conventional view. She argues that the federal system in the USSR afforded a political-administrative apparatus through which minority elites could pursue ethnonational-group interests and by which these minorities could "withstand powerful pressures toward assimilation."[25] As a result, there is plenty of evidence during the Soviet period of dynamic politics between the centre and the regions. The consequences of federalism for aboriginal peoples were no less significant.

Finally, modern state-building meant transforming frontiers into borders. This undertaking required establishing effective surveillance and internal pacification over the entire territorial expanse of the state, including its most remote regions and populations. In this regard, both Canada and Soviet Russia faced formidable tasks. At the end of the nineteenth century, after three hundred years of Russian colonization, the "official resettlement department defined nine-tenths of Siberia as 'completely uninhabited and badly explored.'"[26] When Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory were transferred to the Canadian state in 1870, there were fewer than 2,000 whites and as many as 150,000 aboriginals living in the 2,500,000 square miles of newly acquired territory.[27] In the process of transforming frontiers into borders, aboriginal peoples represented an exceptional challenge. The nomadism of many indigenous peoples, for instance, made surveillance and internal pacification difficult, if not impossible. In addition, the perceived "backwardness" of indigenous peoples precluded their immediate incorporation as equal members of the body politic. Exceptional challenges demanded exceptional measures; through the eyes of the state, indigenous ways of life had to be eliminated.

State-Building and Aboriginal Political Development

Modern state-building forever changed aboriginal-state relations and, as a consequence, the course of aboriginal political development. The change in aboriginal-state relations reveals as much about the nature of modern states as it does about aboriginal political life. Colonial and absolutist regimes tolerated the coexistence of "other" political communities within the boundaries of the territories over which these political orders claimed domination. Under colonial British North America and absolutist Tsarist Russia, aboriginal peoples could exist on the political, cultural, and geographical frontiers of the state. From the perspective of the peoples of European descent, aboriginal peoples were always the "others." However, the Canadian and Soviet states were to transform frontiers, eliminating differences. The "others" were to exist no longer. This logic brought aboriginal peoples into inescapable conflict with the modern state. As a result, modern states and aboriginal people became political *enemies* in Schmitt's sense of term: the political enemy is "the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible."[28] Modern state-building changed the politics of aboriginal-state relations from one of coexistence to one of "friend and enemy." The events in Canada, for example, surrounding the Cree and Metis rebellions of 1885 poignantly manifested this change. As Dickason notes

> [The Cree and Metis] had a common enemy, a distant uncomprehending bureaucracy. . . . As for Ottawa's attitude, it can best be summed up in the observation that the hostility of those in power toward those whom they regarded as inferior--because they were 'others,' strangers--has been an historical constant. In the ambience of 1885, the notion of accommodation with 'savages' was unthinkable, at least in the realm of practical politics.[29]

In fundamental ways, the nomadism and anarchism of aboriginal political communities were radically incompatible with the logic of modern states--and vice versa. Conflict was inevitable. As Simmel reminds us, "Conflict is . . . designed to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some kind of unity, even if it is through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties."[30] It is from this perspective that the policies of modern states toward aboriginal peoples must be understood. The modern state sought to achieve unity of political community. Aboriginal political communities existed outside the body politic and, thus, had to be incorporated. "In the rough and tumble of building nation-states and extending them into empires, unity and conformity were the social and political ideals. The idea of a cultural mosaic within the borders of a single nation-state was not yet taken seriously, if at all considered."[31]

The elimination of indigenous ways of life was not the only goal of aboriginal policy. Aboriginal policy was also accompanied by the goals of the assimilation of aboriginal people into the social fabric of the dominant society and of the enfranchisement of aboriginal individuals as citizens. Soviet scholars were unabashed in their assertion that the Soviet state actively sought to transform completely the way of life of indigenous peoples. Sergeeyev states: "The all-inclusive and planned activity of the Soviet government in reconstructing the life of the [aboriginal peoples] began after the end of the civil war."[32] In Canada, the Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs declared in a similar vein: "'our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill.'"[33] Matching rhetoric with action, the state in Canada and Russia pursued these goals through a variety of policy instruments and, in the process, restructured the political, economic, social, and cultural bases of indigenous ways of life.

State Administration

The will of the state was implemented through the creation of special administrative agencies to address aboriginal affairs. In contrast to their colonial and absolutist predecessors, the administrative agencies for aboriginal affairs of the Canadian and Soviet states were far more bureaucratic, centralized, coherent and, thus, more capable. The British North America Act of 1867 specified that authority for Indians rested with the federal government and, in 1880, the federal government proceeded to create the Department of Indian Affairs. The department was housed under the Minister of the Interior until 1936 when it was placed under the Department of Mines and Resources. In 1949 Indian Affairs was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, and in 1965 it was merged with the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources. Finally, in 1966, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was established in its current form.[34]

The administration of native affairs followed a parallel course in Russia. After the Revolution and Civil War, it was reported that "'the natives of the North live outside the limits of the Constitution of the RSFSR' and were in need of 'extreme measures for their salvation' and of rapid inclusion within the sphere of Soviet authority. The government found it necessary to create a special agency for the handling of the small nationalities."[35] Therefore, in June 1924, the Committee for the Assistance of the Peoples of the Northern Outlying Districts (Committee of the North) was established to address aboriginal affairs.[36] In April 1934, it was resolved that the work of the Committee of the North was completed,[37] and in 1935, its tasks were transferred to Glavsevmorput' (the Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route).[38] In 1962, a permanent working group for the peoples of the North was established in the Council of Ministers of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.[39] And, in 1990, the newly created Goskomsever (State Committee on the Social and Economic Development of the Northern Regions) assumed primary responsibility for aboriginal affairs.

The state created special legislation to guide the administration of aboriginal peoples. In Canada, the primary legislation was the Indian Act of 1876. The Act was very comprehensive, defining who was an Indian, the special rights held by Indians, the special limitations placed on Indians and, importantly, legislation concerning the enfranchisement of Indians as Canadian citizens. Although the intent of the legislation was to facilitate the incorporation of aboriginal people into the dominant body politic, the very development of separate legislation helped institutionalize differences between dominant and aboriginal political communities. For example, individuals defined as Indians under the Act were exempt from military service and taxation; they were also prohibited from consuming liquor in public places, from practising potlatches and sundances, and from political organizing. A number of the most egregious elements of the Act were repealed in the 1951 Indian Act. "Paradoxically, however, the Act is also perceived by some Indians as one of the major protections of Indian rights. . . ."[40] The paradox of the Indian Act is that while it controls Indian people and communities, the measures of control themselves simultaneously help to reinforce their existence as separate political communities.

The Soviet Russian state, too, created special legislation to address the question of aboriginal peoples within the new political order. However, unlike Canada, the Soviet state did not create a single, comprehensive act. Instead, special decrees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of the Council of Ministers of the USSR were issued periodically to guide the administration of native peoples. Similar to Canada, in 1925, the peoples of the North were exempted from the payment of all State and local taxes and from the obligation to do conscript labour and active service in time of war.[41] Other notable decrees were those of 1957 concerning the social and economic development of the peoples of the North, which preceded mass villagization of aboriginal communities across the North, and the 1980 decree which not only sought greater integration of aboriginal peoples into the dominant economy and society, but also attempted to address deteriorating social and economic conditions of many aboriginal communities.[42] As in the case of Canada, because the state treated aboriginal peoples differently in law and administration, the state paradoxically reinforced differences while attempting to eliminate them.

Through these policy instruments, the state implemented changes which radically transformed aboriginal political life. The nature of these changes reflected the image of the state. Predictably, as modern states, Canada and Soviet Russia pursued aggressive assimilationist policies. The state imposed institutions of local government, introduced dominant forms of economic organization, and attempted cultural change through the education system. However, as federal states, the state pursued contradictory segregationist policies, the most important of which was the creation of separate territorial-administrative units for aboriginal peoples in the form of reserves and soviets. In both countries, the stated reason for segregationist policies was that aboriginal peoples were so "backward" that their incorporation required a transition period, as well as special, separate measures. The combination of these contradictory policies, however, led to a particular path of aboriginal political development which has provided the foundations for contemporary struggles for aboriginal self-government to emerge.

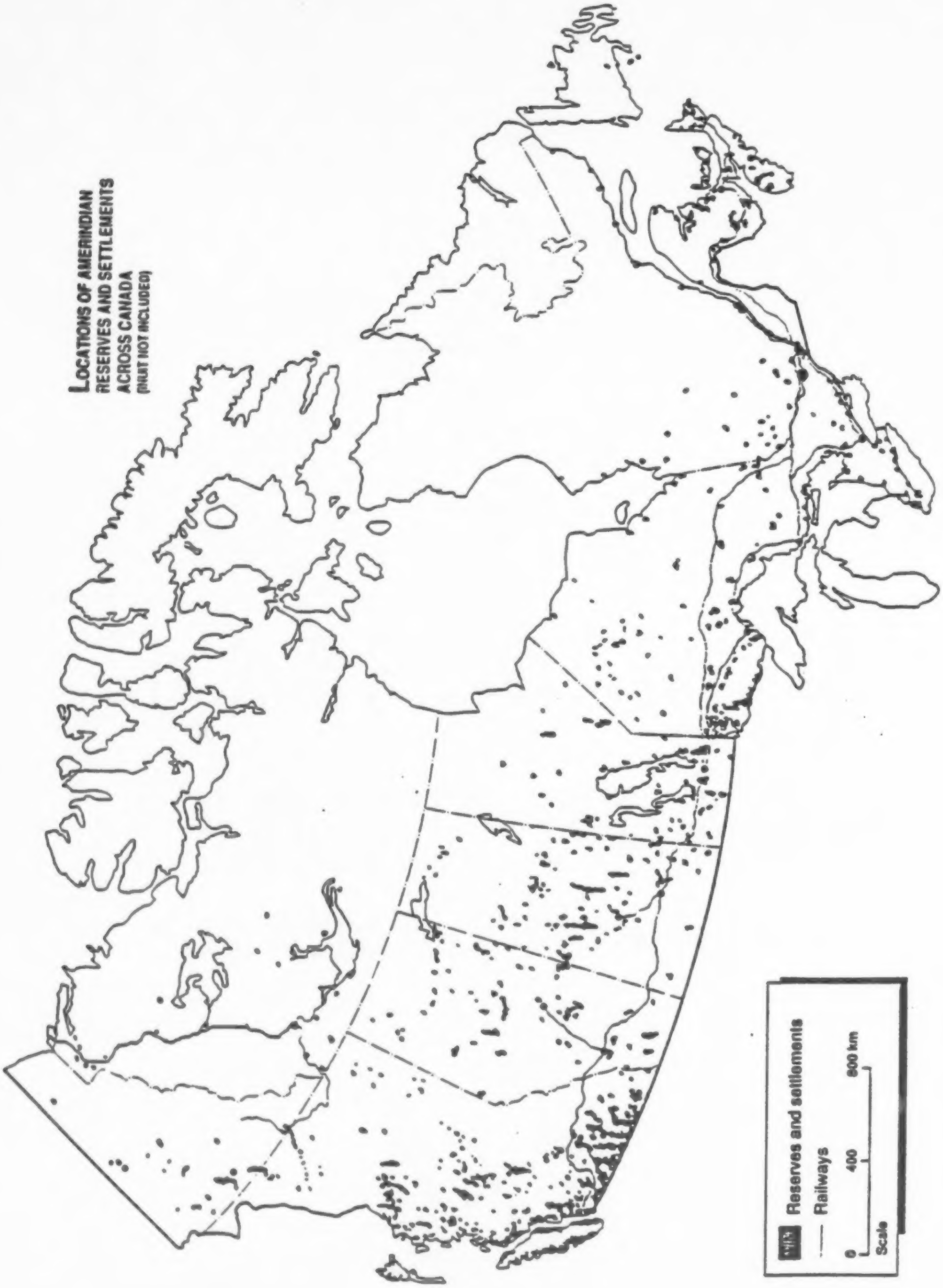
Aboriginal Political Development

Political development, as discussed in Chapter One, refers to fundamental change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its social and economic organization, and, above all, in its political institutions. The primary forces shaping political development are often internal to a community; just as likely, however, they are external. Moreover, the particular course of political development can sometimes be characterized as a sociopolitical episode: processes of social and political change which have a definite direction and form in which major transitions take place whereby one type of society is transformed into another.[43] The particular course of aboriginal political development resulting from the external factor of modern state-building can accurately be described as a sociopolitical episode; peoples without government were transformed into peoples with government.

Central to the transformation of aboriginal political communities was the question of territory. A number of scholars have argued that the treaty process and the creation of reserves were simply vehicles for clearing the way for White settlement. Wotherspoon and Satzewich write: "The treaty-signing process was part of a state strategy to clear away political-legal obstacles to the development of capitalism in Canada that were created, in part, by the Royal Proclamation of 1763."[44] While this may be have been part of the rationale, the creation of reserves in Canada and national soviets in Russia was motivated primarily for a different reason--to terminate the nomadic way of life of indigenous peoples. Nomadism was antithetical to two elements of the modern state, in particular, the maintenance of borders (and the elimination of frontiers) and internal pacification. As John A. MacDonald explained, one of the aims of Indian policy was "to wean them by slow degrees, from their nomadic habits, which have become almost an instinct, and by slow degrees absorb them on the land."[45] The creation of reserves was not unique to the modern state era; in fact, 123 land surrenders and treaties had been accomplished by colonial government.[46] But, reserves were often established on an experimental basis, and settlement on them was voluntary. By contrast, the creation of reserves as a nation-wide policy only occurred after modern state building. Moving west, the Canadian state eventually created approximately 2,200 reserves for some 600 bands (see Map 3.1).[47]

The Russian state proceeded along a similar path. Prior to 1929, the state created about 400 Native Soviets or *Tuzsovety*.[48] These soviets were based on already existing clans and their nomadic territories. After the ascent of Stalin and the consolidation of the Soviet state, aboriginal peoples were reorganized into territorial-administrative units in conformity with Soviet nationalities policy. Between 1929-32, 9 national okrugs were created at the regional level.[49] By 1930, 64 national raions were created at

Map 3.1 *Aboriginal Territorial-Administrative Units in Canada*

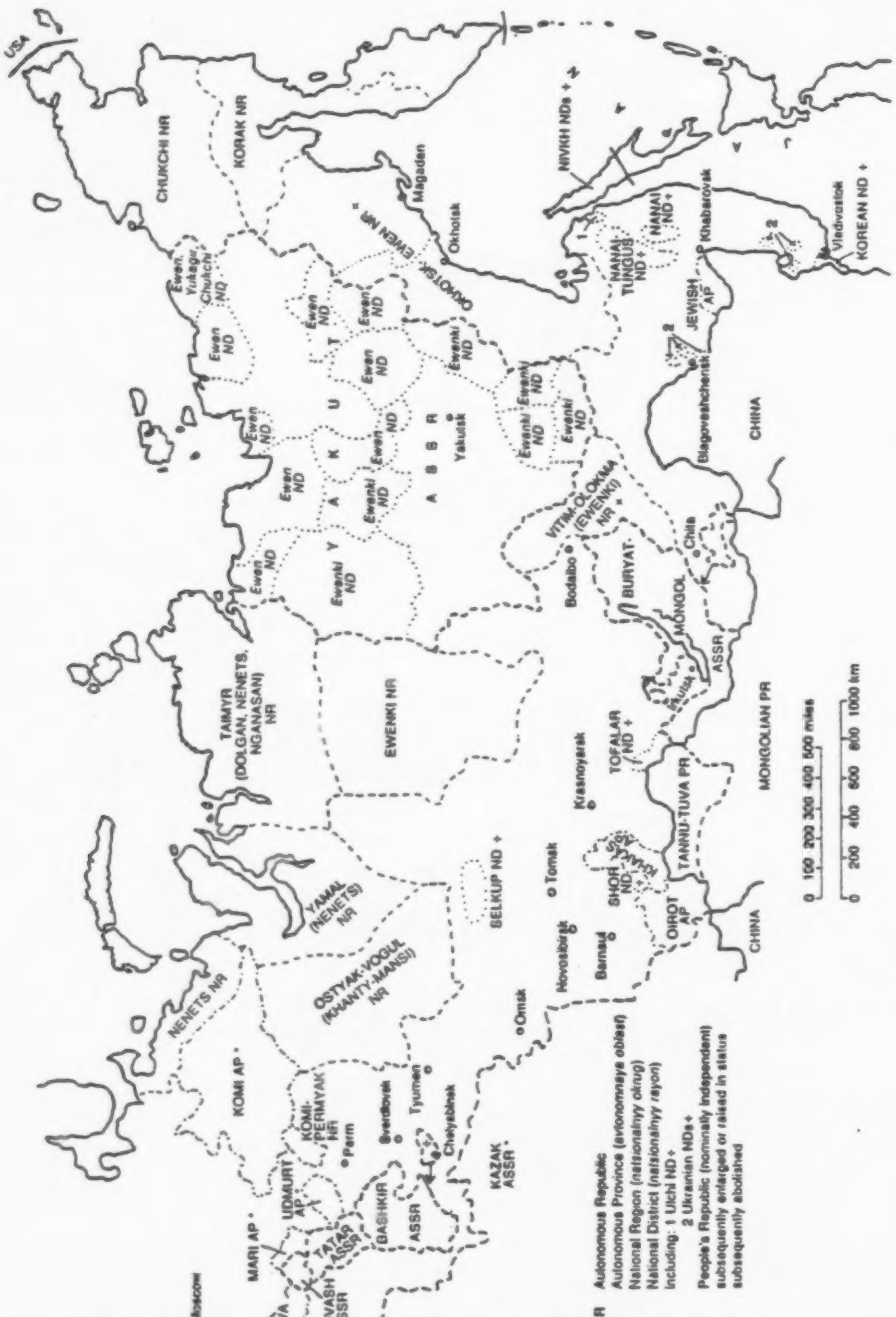

LOCATIONS OF AMERINDIAN RESERVES AND SETTLEMENTS ACROSS CANADA
(INUIT NOT INCLUDED)
Reserves and settlements
Railways
0
400
800 km
Scale

the districts level, and 455 national soviets were created at the local level (see Map 3.2).[50] These latter soviets were the equivalent of reserves in Canada and often include two or more aboriginal communities within their territories. The large national okrugs quickly became aboriginal in name only as large numbers of non-aboriginals migrated to Siberia to work in the resource sectors, and the national raions were eventually officially terminated. In the 1950s, the national soviets were re-named agricultural soviets and the smaller communities within these soviets were consolidated into single larger villages. Sokolova argues that "from the end of the 1950s, the national Soviets lost their specific character [when they] were reorganized into rural villages."[51] Nevertheless, the villages in the soviets were referred to as national villages, retaining their aboriginal identity. Of the different levels of "aboriginal" territorial organization, the national soviets have proven to be the most important and are the bases upon which many territorial claims are presently made.

Along with undercutting nomadism, the systems of reserves and soviets had another profound impact on the political development of aboriginal peoples. In the past, many aboriginal peoples spent the better part of the year in groups of one or two families, coming together during the summer for ceremonial and other purposes, or during times of war. Notably, the size and composition of political communities were often in flux. By settling relatively large numbers of people onto fixed territorial-administrative units, the nature of aboriginal communities was radically transformed. The actual membership of the community became fixed, and was no longer fluid. Moreover, sometimes members from different ethnic groups, say Chukchi and Eskimo (Inuit), were settled on the same soviet, further changing the nature of aboriginal communities. Thus, the reserves and soviets we see today, with a central village and a relatively stable community membership, are not an altered pattern of aboriginal social organization, but a radical break with the past.

The creation of territorial units was pivotal in the political transformation of aboriginal peoples; so, too, was the introduction of government. Both the Canadian and Russian states were intent on destroying clan systems of social organization and replacing these systems with systems of local government similar to those of the dominant society. In Canada, the state created band councils with either hereditary or elected chiefs, though favouring the latter. In Russia, village councils were created on the same basis as village councils in non-aboriginal in rural areas. The creation of the decision-making bodies was also accompanied by the development of small bureaucracies to carry out local policy. Thus, not only was government introduced into traditionally, anarchical communities, but also the form it took mirrored the modern state. There was often considerable aboriginal resistance to the imposition of

Map 3.2 *Aboriginal Territorial-Administrative Units in Russia (1930s)*


USA
CHUKCHI NR
KORAK NR
Magadan
OKHOTSK-EWEN NR +
Okhotsk
NIVKH NDs + 2
NANAI ND+
NANAI-TUNGUS ND+
Khabarovsk
Vladivostok
KOREAN ND +
JEWISH AP
Blagoveshchensk
CHINA
Ewen Yukagir Chukchi ND
Ewen ND
Ewenki ND
Y A K U T
A S S R
Yakutsk
VITIM-OLOKMA (EWENKI) NR +
Bodaibo
Chita
BURYAT-MONGOL ASSR
Irkutsk
TAIMYR (DOLGAN, NENETS, NGANASAN) NR
EWENKI NR
Krasnoyarsk
TOFALAR ND +
MONGOLIAN PR
TANNU-TUVA PR
KHAKAS AP
SHOR ND
Tomsk
SELKUP ND +
YAMAL (NENETS) NR
OSTYAK-VOGUL (KHANTY-MANSI) NR
Novosibirsk
Barnaul
OIROT AP
CHINA
Omsk
NENETS NR
KOMI AP +
KOMI-PERMYAK NR
Perm
Sverdlovsk
Tyumen
Chelyabinsk
KAZAK ASSR
UDMURT AP +
MARI AP +
Moscow
MORDVA AP
CHUVASH ASSR
TATAR ASSR
BASHKIR ASSR
0 100 200 300 400 500 miles
0 200 400 600 800 1000 km
ASSR Autonomous Republic
AP Autonomous Province (avtonomnaya oblast')
NR National Region (natsional'nyy okrug)
ND National District (natsional'nyy rayon)
including: 1 Ulchi ND +
2 Ukrainian NDs +
PR People's Republic (nominally independent)
* subsequently enlarged or raised in status
+ subsequently abolished

government structures on the newly formed aboriginal communities; nevertheless, these government structures have become a reality of contemporary aboriginal political life.

One of the consequences of the institutionalization of government is that, instead of undermining kinship based social organization, kinship was reinforced and became politicized. In the past, without government, any resolution had to be arrived at by consensus, as there was no ultimate authority which could make binding decisions. If a resolution could not be reached, then factions could split off. With government, there now was an ultimate authority. Moreover, dissenting groups had little choice in terms of leaving the community and joining another. Under these circumstances, kinship ties became extremely important because, simply put, those with the largest number of relatives often prevailed in securing local political offices and in staffing the local bureaucracy. Long astutely observes:

> Despite the ascendancy of bureaucracy, however, strong evidence exists that bureaucratic norms have not completely displaced traditional practices. For example, the western bureaucratic norm of political neutrality faces constant challenge from the intrusion of extended kin group interests, resulting in continual clashes between administrative rules and traditional practices. Tribal administrators are expected to 'look out' for the specific interests of individuals and families within their kin groups.[52]

What is interesting is that this appears to hold whether political office is won through competitive election, as is the case in Canada, or through de facto appointment, as was the case in Soviet Russia. Nevertheless, within new aboriginal communities, politics as "who gets, what, when, how" became a reality. Jobs, housing, and other scarce resources were now distributed on reserves and soviets by government. The unequal access to resources has led to the claim that aboriginal communities are now hierarchical, a claim which is readily explainable.

To accelerate change in aboriginal political reorganization and to facilitate the processes of assimilation and enfranchisement of aboriginal people, the state also attempted to transform the economic, social, and cultural bases of aboriginal ways of life. In both Canada and Russia, the state attempted to replace aboriginal subsistence activities through the development of rural-based economies. A key consideration of these efforts was the elimination of the nomadism of many aboriginal peoples. Explaining the rationale of the state to attempt to turn hunters into farmers among the Canadian Plains Indians, Carter writes, "The Indian had to be taught to make his living from the soil. No other occupation could so assuredly dispossess the Indian of his nomadic habits and the uncertainties of the chase, and fix upon him the values of a permanent abode and the security of a margin of surplus."[53] But, even with the intent of incorporating Indians into the dominant economy and society, the particular measures pursued by state in the introduction of agriculture reinforced the disparateness of aboriginal communities. At first, many Indians enjoyed success as farmers. However, for a variety of reasons, the state undermined efforts to grow large grain crops which were machinery intensive. Instead, the state directed agricultural development on reserves along "peasant" lines: Indians were to grow small, varied crops which were labour intensive. Only after a period of transition would they be encouraged to farm like members of the dominant society. This policy in the end failed. "Ironically," notes Buckley, "the stated goal of government policy in the early farm years was assimilation, but its implementation ensured continued separateness and poverty."[54]

In Russia, the reorganization of aboriginal economies occurred in conjunction with the massive economic transformation of Soviet society. For Russian peasants this meant collectivization, that is, turning individual held lands into collectively- or state-owned lands; peasants no longer worked their own lands, but those of the state. For aboriginal peoples practising intensive reindeer herding, collectivization meant, instead of families owning and herding reindeer as a family unit, reindeer herders (usually male) now became employees of the state tending to the state's reindeer in work brigades away from their families. For aboriginal peoples who practised hunting, collectivization often meant a radical change not only in the organization, but also in the substance, of their economic activities. In the case of many Evenk who were nomadic hunters and used reindeer for transportation, the Soviet state attempted to transform these Evenk hunters into herders. In 1927, for example, 92.7% of Evenk in eastern Siberia were organized into hunting and trapping economic units, reflecting traditional subsistence patterns. In 1937, after collectivization, the income derived from hunting and trapping dropped to 24.2% while income derived from reindeer breeding rose to 39.0%.[55] The late 1950s witnessed further economic reorganization as smaller collective farms were amalgamated into larger farms. This policy coincided with "a mass settlement campaign," or villagization, further denomadizing aboriginal hunters and herders.[56] Nevertheless, the economy that the Soviet state created in aboriginal communities was artificial (that is, it did not at all reflect true costs and prices); as such, instead of realizing the incorporation of aboriginal peoples into the dominant economy, maintained their meaningful exclusion from it. Without heavy government subsidies, these economies would not have survived. In fact, with the introduction of a market economy in post-Soviet Russia, many communities that were heavily dependent upon intensive reindeer herding are now facing economic crisis as subsidies are removed, real costs are incurred, and the market prices for reindeer products have come into effect.

Thus, even though the professed goals of economic change were assimilation, the state in Canada and Russia did little in terms of providing the economic foundations within aboriginal communities for this to occur in a meaningful way, nor did the state provide the requisite training for aboriginal individuals to succeed on equal footing with members of the dominant society. Moreover, whether peasant farming in Canada (which ultimately failed) or collectivized reindeer herding in Russia (which is now in crisis), within aboriginal territorial-administrative enclaves, the state established patterns of economic development which were distinct from those of the dominant society. What is more, in many aboriginal communties, especially those more remote from larger urban and industrial centres, important traditional subsistance activities such as hunting, fishing, and berry-picking have survived alongside dominant forms of economic organization. As a consequence, important values such as reciprocity, even if limited, have not been extinguised in these communities.

Along with economic change, the state also directed social and cultural change within aboriginal communities, the most salient aspects of which efforts were the imposition of a formal education system and the undermining of aboriginal spiritual practices. The education system was viewed by the state in both Canada and Russia as the crucial policy instrument through which assimilation could be achieved. It was crucial to extending effective surveillance by the state over aboriginal populations. Both states recognized that the transformation of oral cultures into literate cultures was pivotal to this process. When the Bolsheviks took power, for example, 77 out of 12,300 Chukchi were literate in the Russian language, and reportedly none of the 13,000 Khanty of the Tobolsk region could read or write.[57] The situation was similar in Canada (though some aboriginal peoples had acquired a relatively high literacy in their own language using special syllabic writing systems developed by missionaries in the nineteenth century).

Reflecting the universalizing logic of the state, the education system was also viewed as central to the socialization of aboriginal children into the values of the dominant state and society. Policy makers believed, however, that if aboriginal children remained within aboriginal family settings, the socialization efforts within the school system would be undermined. Moreover, denomadization was not an instantaneous process; it was also recognized that while children travelled with their parents on traplines or with reindeer herds, they could not also attend school: children could not be in two places at one time. Therefore, an extensive system of residential or boarding schools was established for aboriginal children. In Russia, this was accomplished directly by the state; in Canada, indirectly through religious orders, usually Anglican or Catholic. Throughout the Russian North, for instance, the state created as many as two hundred boarding schools for aboriginal children.[58] Many families sent their children voluntarily to residential and boarding schools with the view that a formal education would be an essential asset for their children in a changing world. Others were far less acquiescent. As one Khanty woman declared in 1934,

> Why are you Russians trying to prevent us from living our way? Why do they take our children to school and teach them to forget and to break up the Khanty ways? They'll take our children to school, and then take them to Leningrad. There they'll forget their parents and won't come back home. You like children, for example, so how would you feel if they took away your children and taught them to despise everything about the way you live? Would it make you feel good?[59]

Nevertheless, generations of aboriginal children in Canada and Russia attended residential and boarding schools. On the one hand, the state did enjoy a certain degree of success in its assimilation efforts. In many communities, for example, aboriginal language retention has rapidly fallen and many traditional subsistence skills have been lost. At the same time, however, the education system also created an aboriginal intelligentsia, as well as a lingua franca for very diverse aboriginal peoples and language groups within each respective state.

The education system played an important role in another assimilationist objective of the state: the elimination of aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices. In Canada, the residential schools run by the various religious denominations were ideal vehicles for the Christianization of aboriginal people within the context of a Western value system, an aim which missionaries had previously initiated several centuries ago. In Russia, within the ideological framework of Marxism-Leninism, the state infused not Christianity, but "scientific atheism." However, the state did not rely on the education system alone. It also used the coercive arm of the state to repress traditional spiritual practices. As early as 1884, the Indian Act in Canada was amended to prohibit Potlatches and Tamanawas (medicine and healing ceremonies).[60] Other spiritual practices were openly condemned as manifestations of the works of the "devil." Despite the efforts of the state, important elements of traditional spiritual knowledge have survived. In Russia, an openly aggressive campaign against shamanism began in the 1920s. Under Stalin, this campaign became extremely oppressive as many shamans were killed or sent to the gulag where few survived. Thus, there are few individuals today who possess the traditional spiritual knowledge for shamanism to survive in any meaningful form. Despite renewed interest in shamanism, it is difficult to be optimistic about its future prospects.

How can aboriginal political development be characterized? Trotsky observes that political development does not occur in sets of prescripted stages through which each country or people must progress. Instead, he argues development is uneven and combined: as leading countries encounter "backward" countries and peoples, the former compel the latter to keep up; in the process, new societies emerge--amalgams of tradition and modernity.[61] Without accepting Trotsky's materialist framework, his notion of uneven and combined development captures the essence of aboriginal political development. As a result of modern state-building, peoples without government were transformed into peoples with government, and state-like conceptions of borders and bureaucracies have become realities of everyday aboriginal political life. Economies have changed; so, too, have social and cultural dimensions of life. At the same time, however, many traditional elements have persisted, often counter intuitively, as a result of Western technologies. Asch provides the example of country food among the Dene of northern Canada:

> The ability to sustain such a significant level of country food production is based largely on the use of Western technology such as the rifle, the skidoo and the steel trap. It is therefore ironic that many people consider the adoption of such items as symbolizing the abandonment of native traditions. Often, given the contemporary situation, it is only through the use of this frequently expensive technology that native people are able to pursue their traditional land-based subsistence activities.[62]

Kinship has also continued to play a salient role in present-day political life in terms of decision-making and leadership selection, though now through the institution of government. Finally, the creation of separate territorial-administrative units for aboriginal peoples--consistent with the logic of federalism--has provided for the unintended emergence of political communities which possess shared histories and experiences. As a result of their uneven and combined development, aboriginal political communities in Canada and Russia remain distinct from the states and societies which dominate them.

Canada and Russia in Comparative Perspective

When we compare the historical contexts of the political development of aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia against each other, critical and causally relevant differences are evident, except for one, modern state-building. (See Table 3.1.) Other explanations of aboriginal politics, especially those based on the logic of capitalism, cannot account for the similar patterns of aboriginal political development. When we compare Canada and Russia against themselves, holding all other factors constant, we find one factor that accounts for the transformation of aboriginal political communities, modern state-building. Objections may be raised that these countries cannot be compared against themselves because time has passed, and the experiences of the previous period affect the decisions of state elites in later periods. However, some scholars have argued just the opposite, that the creation of modern states changed little. The historical record does not support that argument.

Table 3.1 *Canada and Russia Compared*

	Colonial Canada	Canada	Tsarist Russia	Soviet Russia
Alternatives				
Culture	Western	Western	Eastern Slavic	Eastern Slavic
Economy	Capitalist	Capitalist	Feudal	State-Socialist
Political Regime	Democratic	Democratic	Autocratic	Authoritarian
Causal Variable				
Form of State	Colonial	Modern Federal	Absolutist	Modern Federal
State Policy	Internal Political Autonomy	Segregation and Assimilation	Internal Political Autonomy	Segregation and Assimilation
Outcome	Self-Determining and Anarchical	Political Life Transformed	Self-Determining and Anarchical	Political Life Transformed

Moreover, the thesis that federal modern state-building set in motion a particular path of aboriginal political development is made even clearer when we compare Canada and Russia with unitary states such as Norway and Japan. In contrast to the assimilationist *and* segregationist policies pursued by the Canada and Russia, modern states in Norway and Japan pursued assimilationist policies: they did not create separate territorial-administrative units for aboriginal peoples. As a consequence, although aboriginal peoples in Norway and Japan are seeking greater political rights to preserve their languages, cultures, and traditional economic activities, they are not seeking self-government, nor may that be possible within unitary states.

Norway and Japan as Contrasts

The Sami and Ainu are the respective indigenous peoples of Norway and Japan. The Sami have lived in the northern part of Europe stretching from northern Norway to the Russian Kola Peninsula for at least two thousand years.[63] Traditionally, the Sami lived in small, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities and possessed egalitarian social organization. Until about four hundred years ago, most Sami were either hunter-gatherers or fisher-gatherers. Intensive reindeer herding, with which the Sami are associated around world, is relatively new to the Sami way life, dating back no earlier than the sixteenth century.[64] Only after the 1500s and 1600s, when wild reindeer stocks declined, did reindeer pastoralism became a dominant subsistence activity. While always numerically small, today the Sami in Norway number between 40,000 and 45,000, or about 1% of the population of Norway.[65]

The Ainu, who were also a small-numbered people, presently number between 18,000 and 25,000, a tiny fraction of the total population of Japan.[66] Traditionally, like the Sami, the Ainu were nomadic and semi-nomadic, hunter-gatherers and hunter-fishers. Along with hunting and fishing, some Ainu also practiced small scale horticulture, moving every two to three years when soils were depleted. Ainu social organization was egalitarian and leaders possessed little authority. It is not known for certain how much territory the Ainu once inhabited. In addition to Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles, evidence suggests that prior to Japanese expansion the Ainu also may have inhabited most of present-day Japan. However, by the end of the 12th century, following a number of battles with Japanese forces, the Ainu were driven from Honshu. In 1884, the Kurile Ainu were forced to move to Shikotan Island,[67] and following the Second World War, the Sakhalin Ainu were relocated to Hokkaido. As a consequence, now the only remaining Ainu live on Hokkaido.

Denmark-Norway and Tokugawa Japan

In contrast to the indigenous peoples of North America and Siberia, both the Sami and Ainu coexisted for centuries with dominant societies prior to the global expansion of European power. Even with the rise of an absolutist state in Norway in 1661 and a reunified state in Japan in 1600,[68] the Sami and Ainu were able to maintain considerable cultural integrity. In fact, not only were the Sami and Ainu able to persist under Norwegian and Japanese domination, but the distinctiveness of these titular societies was formally recognized by the political orders that dominated them.

Contact between Norwegians and Sami throughout the Middle Ages was intermittent. With increasing interest in the North expressed by Norwegians, Swedes, Russians, and others, the Sami began to play a middleman role in trade. After 1326, the Sami were subject to joint taxation of those powers (e.g. Denmark-Norway and Russia) competing for domination of the territory inhabited by the Sami, a situation which lasted over four hundred years.[69] There were efforts to colonize the most northerly part of Norway, Finnmark, as early as the 9th century, though colonization of Sami lands almost invariably was pioneered by missionaries and traders. It was not until the 1600 and 1700s that Norwegian settler colonization gained momentum; at the same time, missionary work received renewed interest. One of the most notable missions was led by Thomas von Westen in the early 1700s. He took great efforts to learn the Sami language and to translate liturgical writings into the Sami language.

Despite the expansion of Norwegian influence, the land of the Sami remained very much a frontier area. When Sweden and Denmark-Norway, for instance, concluded the border treaty of 1751, a supplement was added, known as the Sami codicil. The Sami codicil recognized the rights of the reindeer herding Sami to the pasture lands on both sides of the newly fixed international "border" as well as provisions to limited self-governance.[70] For these reasons, this codicil has been referred to as the Sami Magna Carta.[71] Until the 19th century, the primary interest of the state in the Sami was largely limited to exacting taxes and Christianization; in other spheres, the Sami continued to enjoy considerable autonomy. As Tove Skotvedt notes, "[d]espite the gradual loss of their political and economic independence, the Sami were more or less left in peace until the nineteenth century."[72]

In contrast to the Sami, the Ainu, beginning as early as the 7th century, experienced periods of considerable armed conflict with the expanding Japanese. By the 12th century, the Ainu had been pushed from Honshu, and Hokkaido became the focal point of Ainu-Japanese contact. In 1604, following the founding of the Tokugawa state, the Ainu and their land (Hokkaido), then called Ezo, was given to the authority of the Matsumae household. Until the Meiji Restoration, the Matsumae household held control over Ezo and, importantly, a monopoly on trade with the Ainu. The last two significant armed conflicts between the Ainu and Japanese, the 'Battle of Shakushain' in 1669 and the 'Battle of Kunashiri Menashi' in 1789, confirmed Japanese domination over the Ainu and their land.[73]

Notwithstanding decisive Japanese control throughout the entire Tokugawa period, Ezo was treated as a colonial frontier, not as a territory integral to the Japanese state. Although subject to increasing Japanese colonization, particularly fishing and trading outposts, ninety-five percent of Ezo was reserved for the Ainu and could not be permanently settled by Japanese.[74] Moreover, the Ainu were able to maintain key elements of their way of life, including outward, cultural manifestations, such as wearing long, unbound hair and wearing kimonos folded to the left.[75]

Given the relatively small territorial expanses of Norway and Japan, as well as the huge population imbalances between dominant and indigenous societies (let alone military superiority), one might expect nearly complete assimilation of indigenous minorities long before modern state building in

Norway and Japan commenced. Why did this not occur? Norway, before 1814, and Japan, before 1868, shared crucial attributes with what Giddens calls traditional states. In both countries, the state was neither highly centralized nor bureaucratic in the modern sense. Significantly, although both countries started to develop conceptions of precisely demarcated borders, frontiers were defining elements of both polities. Consequently, in Norway and Japan, the state lacked the administrative capacities to maintain surveillance and to pursue internal pacification over territories to which it formally claimed domination. Also absent was a universalizing political logic which demanded the application of uniform rule across the totality of the territory dominated by the state; this was manifested in the maintenance of frontier areas. Together, these elements allowed for a plurality of ways of life to exist within a single polity and, thus, the Sami and Ainu were able to survive on the cultural and territorial frontiers of the state.

Constitutional Norway and Meiji Japan

The nineteenth century witnessed radical changes in state and society in Norway and Japan. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark lost Norway, and the latter was united with Sweden under a single crown. During the union of Sweden and Norway (1814-1905), "the two countries remained two distinct polities under the same crown with different political institutions and independence in home affairs."[76] Writes Ulf Torgersen: "Simply stated, Norway was established as an independent nation in 1814."[77] From this point forward, Norwegian political elites embarked on the task of modern state building. During the following ninety years, they created the Norwegian constitution of 1814, founded the Storting as the national parliament, established the krone as the national currency and, eventually, achieved complete independence from Sweden in 1905. In Japan, political elites, too, pursued a course of modern state building. In contrast to Norway, however, the process of state building in Japan has been accurately characterized as a 'revolution from above'.[78] During the Meiji Restoration of 1868, reform-minded military officers and bureaucrats, under the banner of nationalism and with the restoration of the emperor as their unifying symbol, successfully staged a coup d'état, smashing the traditional Tokugawa political order. In both cases, Norwegian and Japanese political elites sought to create modern, bureaucratic states and to develop industrial economies, in significant part, to meet the exigencies of external politico-military competition. The modern states that were built in both countries were more "centralized, bureaucratic, and autonomously powerful at home and abroad . . . ."[79] than their traditional predecessors. At the same time, the emergence of Norwegian and Japanese nationalism helped provide the basis for a universalizing political logic. Given the homogeneity of both societies, it is not surprising, therefore, that unitary states were created in both Norway and Japan.

The process of building modern unitary states had direct consequences for the Sami and Ainu. No longer to remain on the cultural and territorial frontiers of the state, the Sami and Ainu peoples and their lands were to be fully incorporated into Norwegian and Japanese state and society. Both states enjoyed a great deal of success in this endeavour, though more so in Japan.

As late as the 18th century, the Danish-Norwegian state permitted the Sami considerable cultural autonomy. "New in the 19th century was a Norwegian policy toward cultural assimilation of the Sami population."[80] Oystein Steinlien dates the period of Norwegianization/assimilation from 1850 with the introduction of the *Finnefondent* "a sort of foundation for the promotion of the Norwegian language in Sami areas" to 1959 with the acceptance of 'integrational pluralism'.[81] Norwegianization of the Sami was in part a response to perceived external threats to the integrity of the Norwegian state and in part a strategy to incorporate the frontier regions of Norway into the nascent unitary state. Settlement of the Norwegian North was central to this effort. In 1815 in Finnmark, the most northerly region of Norway and the region with the largest number of Sami, Sami outnumbered Norwegians by 3 to 1; by 1900, Norwegians outnumbered Sami 2 to 1.[82] Whereas in the past, Sami rights to pasture land were acknowledged by the state, the post-1814 Norwegian state declared all lands in Finnmark crown lands. The state also made it difficult for Sami to acquire private land in the region. The State Land Act of 1902 restricted ownership of private land to Norwegians and those could speak, read, and write Norwegian, effectively excluding most Sami. In the education system, Sami was no longer permitted as a language of instruction, and students were punished if they spoke Sami. The message was clear: in order to survive in the new political order, one had to assimilate into the dominant culture.

Following the Meiji Restoration, the Ainu were subject to extremely intense assimilationist pressures. In 1869, Ezo was annexed by Japan and renamed Hokkaido. This signaled the beginning of the campaign to assimilate the Ainu into the body politic of Japan and to transform Hokkaido from a territorial and cultural frontier into a territory, integral to Japanese state, economy, and society. Central to this transformation was the policy of rapid economic development of Hokkaido. David Howell notes: "After the Meiji state came to power it immediately launched a vigorous programme of agricultural and industrial development in Hokkaido. The assimilation of the Ainu was an integral aspect of that policy."[83] To accomplish this task, the Japanese state sought to undermine traditional economic pursuits and to extinguish outward, Ainu cultural manifestations. Hokkaido was opened up to Japanese settlers in search of farmland. To make room for this settlement, Ainu were evacuated from areas where rivers were rich in salmon and mountains were plentiful with deer.[84] In 1899, the Meiji state enacted the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Act which aimed at transforming Ainu from hunter/fisher-gatherers into farmers. In 1900, education became compulsory for Ainu children, but because of the language barrier, a separate school system was maintained until 1937.[85]

Importantly, neither the Norwegian nor the Japanese state segregated indigenous peoples onto separate territorial-administrative units; this, however, was consistent with the logic of the unitary states created in both countries. As a result, the assimilation rates of the Sami and Ainu have been very high. In Japan, for instance, there are only a handful of people who can speak the Ainu language fluently, and all these are over sixty years of age.

Aboriginal Peoples and the State: The Paradox of Federalism

The comparision of aboriginal-state relations between Canada and Russia, on the one hand, and Norway and Japan, on the other, helps to illustrate central arguments advanced in this study (See Table 3.2). First, modern state-building was pivotal in the transformation of the social and political life of aboriginal peoples in all four cases. Under traditional political orders, aboriginal peoples were able to maintain considerable internal political autonomy and cultural integrity. After modern state-building, indigenous peoples were subject to assimilationist pressures. Second, in contrast to Canada and Russia, the Norwegian and Japanese states did not create separate territorial-administrative units for the aboriginal peoples subject to their domination. This was a consequence of the federal logic of the Canadian and Soviet Russian states. This critical difference not only had consequences for patterns of aboriginal political development: in Canada and Russia, aboriginal peoples have emerged, unintended by the state, as distinct, albeit transformed, political communities who occupy their own terrritorial bases. As the next chapter will demonstrate, it also had consequences in the development of contemporary struggles for aboriginal self-determination.

Table 3.2 *States and Aboriginal Political Development*

	Canada	Norway	Russia	Japan
Common Starting Point	First Nations are self-determining and anarchical under British colonial rule.	Sami remain self-determining and anarchical under Danish absolutism.	Small Peoples of the North remain self-determining and anarchical under Tsars.	Ainu remain self-determining and anarchical under Tokugawa order.
Alternative Variables				
Culture	Western: individualism and political rights important; civil society exists.	Western: individualism and political rights important; civil society exists.	Non-Western: Byzantine; collective of greater importance; civil society is weak.	Non-Western: Confucian; emphasis on the collective; weak civil society.
Economy	Capitalist: commercial agriculture; private industrial sector; large public sector.	Capitalist: commercial agriculture; private industrial sector; large public sector.	Non-Capitalist: command economy collectivization of agriculture; state industrialization.	Capitalist: state-directed rapid industrialization; commercial agriculture.
Political Regime	Democratic: Westminster style democracy; political and civil rights protected.	Democratic: parliamentary democracy; political and civil rights protected.	Authoritarian: Communist party-state; severe limitations on political and civil rights.	Authoritarian (until 1945): fascist, military state; few political and civil rights.
Causal Variable Modern State-Building	Federal State: centralized and bureaucratic; provinces have considerable power; provincial identities relatively strong.	Unitary State: highly centralized and bureaucratic; strong national identity develops.	Federal State: highly centralized and bureaucratic; ethnoregional elites exercise limited power within administrative order.	Unitary State: highly centralized, bureaucratic state; very strong national identity is forged.
Outcomes				
State Policy	Segregation and Assimilation: separate Native territorial units created; residential schools created; institutions of local government imposed.	Assimilation: no separate territorial units created; no recognizition of special rights.	Assimilation and Segregation: separate Native territorial units created; boarding schools established; institutions of local government imposed.	Assimilation: no separate territorial units created; no recognizition of special aboriginal rights.
Aboriginal Political Development	Transformation of anarchical peoples into communities with government and territory; some traditional elements survive.	High rates of assimilation into the dominant society; language/traditional subsistence activities at risk.	Transformation of anarchical peoples into communities with government and territory; some traditional elements survive.	Very high rates of assimilation into the dominant society; Ainu language not likely to survive.

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[1] John S. Milloy, "Early Indian Acts," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada*, ed. J. R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 146.

[2] See, for example, C. D. Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society* (Victoria.: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1986), 10-26; John L. Tobias, "Protection Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada*, ed. J. R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 127-144.

[3] Vic Satzewich and Terry Wotherspoon, *First Nations: Race, Class and Gender Relations* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1993), 15-41.

[4] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 1.

[5] Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 181.

[6] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 120.

[7] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).

[8] Ibid., 12.

[9] Ibid., 13.

[10] It goes without saying that there are alternate views on the question of law and soveriegnty. Some argue that law, temporally and logically, preceeds sovereignty. Other argue that law and sovereignty are two sides of the same coin in that one presupposes the existence of the other. The view advanced here argues that sovereignty and law are analytically distinct, albeit related. Temporally, law precedes sovereignty by thousands of year. However, as the foundation of ultimate decision making power within the modern state, sovereignty is prior to law. This view is consistent with the universalizing political logic of the modern state as disussed in the text.

[11] Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 102.

[12] Gianfranco Poggi, *The Modern State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 23. There are only seventeen (17) federal states in the world accounting; unitary state account for ninety percent of independent nation-states (James John Guy, *People, Politics & Government*, 3rd ed. [Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1995], 142-45). Incidentally, among the approximately 170 recognized sovereign states, only 17 are federal.

[13] However, the existence of everyday violence in the ghettoes of major American cities, for instance, demonstrates that the modern state is not omnipotent.

[14] Bertrand Badie and Pierre Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 105.

[15] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 5.

[16] Ibid, 6.

[17] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 104.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ralf Dahrendorf, *The Modern Social Conflict: An Essay on the Politics of Liberty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 31.

[20] Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 309.

[21] Responsible government came to Canada in 1840.

[22] One of the most significant differences between Canada and Russia, however, was the role of the Communist Party in the latter. The polity in Russia has been described accurately by a number of scholars as a party-state. In contrast to liberal democracies which hold regular, competitive elections, party-states are marked by the monopoly of state power, which is recognized constitutionally, by a single party. During the Soviet period, state policy was [illegible]ected by the Communist Party and implemented through parallel party and state apparatuses, the former overseeing the latter. In reality, party and state power was fused. As Poggi notes, the party "exercises these powers [constitutional] through its own organs, *but* in doing so it

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routinely and bindingly sets the policies, directs the activities, commits the resources of the state (Poggi, *The Modern State*, 149)." Thus, in the discussion that follows, it should be kept in mind that it was a highly centralized Communist Party which directed state policy in Russia during the Soviet period.

[23] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia & China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 285. While Skocpol refers to Russia (and France and China), this also characterizes the modern Canadian state versus its colonial predecessor.

[24] Anthony Perl, "Public Enterprise as an Expression of Sovereignty: Reconsidering the Origin of Canadian National Railways," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 27:1 (March 1994): 52.

[25] Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR," in *The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context*, ed. Rachel Denber (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 399. Originally published in *Problems of Communism* 23, no. 3 (May-June 1974): 1-22.

[26] Yuri Selzkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 97.

[27] Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993), 297; Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971), 1.

[28] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 27.

[29] Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 313.

[30] Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*, trans. Kurt H. Wolff and Reinhard Bendix (New York: The Free Press, 1955), 14.

[31] Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 313. Commenting on the Indian Act of 1876, Katherine Pettipas writes,"These regulations were developed to transform 'Indians' into 'Canadians' through a colonial relationship characterized by wardship and tutelage. . . . The vision of the nation-state in the 1870s was not based on a concept of political, economic, or cultural pluralism (*Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Ceremonies on the Prairies* [Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1994], 17)."

[32] M.A. Sergeyev, "The Building of Socialism among the Peoples of Northern Siberia and the Soviet Far East," in *The Peoples of Siberia*, ed. M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 487.

[33] J. Rick Ponting and Roger Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance: A Socio-political Introduction to Indian Affairs in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980), 18.

[34] Satzewich and Wotherspoon, *First Nations*, 37.

[35] M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov, ed.,*The Peoples of Siberia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 490.

[36] V. N. Uvachan, *Perekhox k Sotsializmu Malykh Narodov Severa* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1958), 46.

[37] I. S. Gurvich, *Etnocheskoe razbitiye narodnotstey severa v sovetskiy period*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 27.

[38] Greg Poelzer, "Devolution, Constitutional Development, and the Russian North," *Post-Soviet Geography* vol. 36 (April 1990): 207.

[39] Kerstin Eidlitz Kuoljok, *The Revolution in the North: Soviet Ethnography and Nationality Policy*, trans. T. J. M. Gray and N. Tomkinson (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1985), 54.

[40] Roger Gibbins and J. Rick Ponting, "Historical Overview and Background," in *Arduous Journey: canadian indians and decolonization*, ed. J. Rick Ponting (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 23.

[41] Kuoljok, *Revolution in the North*, 57.

[42] Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 375.

[43] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 245.

[44] Satzewich and Wotherspoon, *First Nations*, 9.

[45] Ponting and Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance*, 17.

[46] Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 273.

[47] James A. Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts*, 3rd. ed. (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1988), 150.

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[48] Walter Kolarz, *The Peoples of the Soviet Far East* (New York: Frederick A. Praegar, 1954), 67.

[49] Terence Armstrong, "The Administration of Northern Peoples: The USSR," in *The Arctic Frontier*, ed. R. St. J. MacDonald (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 68.

[50] A. I. Kuznetsov, "Avtonomiya ili samoupravleniye," *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, no. 2 (1990): 6.

[51] Z. P. Sokolova, "Narody severa SSSR: proshloe, nastoyashchee," *Sovietskaya etnografiya* , no. 6 (1990): 18.

[52] J. Anthony Long, Political Revitalization in Canadian Native Indian Societies," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 23 (December 1990), 768.

[53] Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 18.

[54] Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 58.

[55] David G. Anderson, "Turning Hunters into Herders: A Critical Examination of Soviet Development Policy among the Evenki of Southeastern Siberia," *Arctic* 44 (march 1991): 15.

[56] Sokolova, "Narody severa SSSR," 26.

[57] Kuoljok, *Revolution in the North*, 59.

[58] Ibid., 60

[59] V. Senkevich, "V Voitekhovskikh iurtakh," *Sovetskiy Sever*, no. 6 (19334), 101 as cited in Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 237.

[60] Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, 93.

[61] Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, trans. Max Eastman (New York: Anchor Foundation, 1980), 4-6.

[62] Michael Asch, *Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1988), 18.

[63] Arne Selbyg, *Norway Today: An Introduction to Modern Norwegian Society* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986), 81.

[64] Myrdene Anderson, "Vectors of Diversification and Specialization in Saami Society," in *Contemporary Nomadic and Pastoral Peoples: Asia and the North: Studies in Third World Societies* No. 18 (1982): 97-124.

[65] Elina Helander, *The Sami of Norway* (Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1992), 1.

[66] George A. De Vos and William O. Wetherall, *Japan's Minorities: Burakumin, Koreans, Ainu and Okinawans* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1983).

[67] Sakuzaemon Kodama, *Ainu: Historical and Anthropological Studies* (Sapporo: Hokkaido University School of Medicine, 1970), 34.

[68] Norway existed for more than four hundred years as part of the Danish kingdom, between 1375 and 1814. Its absolutist period lasted from 1661 to 1814 when "Denmark-Norway had become the 'Twin Kingdoms'." (Still, the Danes continued to dominate Norwegian state and society.) Japan was unified as a single traditional state during the Tokugawa era, between 1600 and 1868 and remained relatively isolated from external influence.

[69] Aage Solbakk, ed.*The Sami People*, trans. Alison A. Olsen and Maide Kloster(Oslo: Sami Instituhtta, 1990), 34.

[70] Terje Brantenberg, "Norway: Constructing Indigenous Self-Government in a Nation-State," in *The Challenge of Northern Regions*, ed. Peter Jull and Sally Roberts (Darwin: Australia National University, 1991), 71.

[71] Hugh Beach, "The Saami of Lapland," in *Polar Peoples: Self-Determination and Development* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1994), 172.

[72] Tove Skotvedt, "Sami: The Indigenous Peoples of Norway," in *Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway*, ed. Anne Cohen Kiel (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1993), 166.

[73] "Ainu address the UN for the first time," *IWGIA Newsletter*, no. 51/52 (October-December 1987), 61.

[74] David L. Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," *Past & Present*, no. 142 (February 1994), 85.

[75] Ibid., 88-89.

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[76] Tim Knudsen and Bo Rothstein, "State Building in Scandinavia," *Comparative Politics* (January 1994), 211.

[77] Ulf Torgersen, "Political Institutions," in *Norwegian Society*, ed. Natalie Ragoff Ramsoy (Oslo: Univeritetsforlaget, 1974), 199.

[78] Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution From Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1978).

[79] Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 285. While Skocpol refers explictly to revolutionary Russia, France and China, it is equally applicable to those states which have modernized through other routes.

[80] Skotvedt, "Sami: The Indigenous Peoples of Norway," 166.

[81] Oystein Steilnlien, "The Sami Law: A Change of Norwegian Government Policy toward the Sami Minority?" *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 9, no. 1 (1989): 3-5.

[82] Solbakk, *The Sami People*, 59.

[83] Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," 91.

[84] Kayano Shigeru, *Our Land Was a Forest: An Ainu Memoir* (Boulder: Westview Press, 199), 37-38.

[85] Douglas Sanders, "Japan: The Ainu as an Indigenous People," *IWGIA Newsletter*, no. 45 (April 1986): 126.

CHAPTER FOUR
The Return of the Native

Struggles for aboriginal rights are common; struggles for aboriginal self-government are rare. Canada and Russia are among those few countries in which struggles for aboriginal self-government are taking place and in which some successes have been achieved to date. The particular logic of modern federal states is pivotal to explaining both the origins and the outcomes of these struggles. The origins are rooted in the course of aboriginal political development which was precipitated by the contradictory assimilationist and segregationist policies of the Canadian and Soviet Russian states. In both countries, the state attempted to assimilate aboriginal peoples into the dominant society: the state created residential and boarding schools for aboriginal children and banned aboriginal spiritual practices; it also imposed institutions of local government. At the same time, consistent with the logic of federalism, the state segregated aboriginal peoples into separate territorial-administrative units. These contradictory policies have transformed aboriginal peoples into political communities possessing state-like conceptions of territoriality and institutions of government; have produced a well-educated, aboriginal political elite, and politicized aboriginal community members; and, thus, have provided the foundations of contemporary aboriginal political organization. However, political organization is not a sufficient condition for achieving aboriginal political goals. Political resources and opportunity are also required. Without political resources, community aspirations cannot be transformed into collective action; without opportunity, collective action cannot take place. Because the political culture of federal states is conducive to the creation of other sub-national, self-governing, political communities, the federal logic of modern states in Canada and Russia has proven very important to accomplishing the outcome of aboriginal self-government.

This chapter examines the elements that account for the struggle for aboriginal self-government in Canada and Russia. First, it discusses contemporary aboriginal political organization and interests, and the resources available to realize these interests. The chapter proceeds with an analysis of the changes external to aboriginal communities which have created the opportunity to advance aboriginal collective interests against the state: the emergence of societies which permitted dissent in conjunction with constitutional change and international pressure have allowed aboriginal peoples to engage in struggles for greater political autonomy and for recognition of increased political rights. Then it assesses the outcomes of the struggle for self-government achieved to date and those that are likely to be achieved in the future. Finally, the chapter contrasts the path to aboriginal self-government in Canada and Russia with the struggle for increased rights by the Sami and Ainu of Norway and Japan.

Organization

Political struggle demands political organization. As long time student of political conflict, Ted Gurr, notes, "Communal grievances are not likely to come to the attention of governments or outside observers until they are given coherent expression by leaders of political movements who claim to represent the group's interests."[1] Specifically, political organization refers to the degree of collective identity and to the extent and form of intragroup ties. The role of political organization is all the more important for aboriginal peoples since they possess far fewer resources for political action compared to many other groups of the dominant society and, especially, to the state. The form of contemporary aboriginal political organization is neither coincidental nor simply a mirror of traditional patterns of political organization. Rather it is a consequence of the particular course of aboriginal political development: "Neither Indian [indigenous] groups nor the collective identities they carry are the same today as they were at the time of contact with whites."[2] As we saw in Chapter Two, traditional aboriginal organization and identity were based on kinship and were usually centered in the band; contemporary political organization is based on territorial-administrative structures imposed on aboriginal peoples, as well as their shared historical experiences. As a result, tribal, pan-tribal, and supratribal levels of organization have emerged as the primary bases of aboriginal collective action.[3]

Among the three levels of organization, the tribal level approximates most closely traditional political organization. The territorial-administrative organization imposed by the state created new communities out of the old: hitherto nomadic bands with fluid membership were transformed into settled communities with relatively permanent membership; moreover, different bands (and in some cases different peoples, such as Even and Yukagir) were often settled together; in the process, the reserve or the soviet, not the band or tribe, became the principal unit of political life. Nevertheless, it is political community at the local level which continues to define the primary basis of aboriginal identity and organization. Reserves and soviets remain very much face-to-face communities, and kinship continues to play a central role in everyday political life. Other factors have also served to strengthen this primary commitment to the local level community. Competition among local communities for limited resources from external state agencies reinforces primary political identity with community members' reserve or soviet. Internally, local aboriginal elites, who control relatively significant administrative and financial resources, foster commitment to the local level community, often in very symbolic ways. It is not uncommon to see an individual from a native community wearing a baseball cap or sports jacket which proudly displays, for example, "Beaver Creek First Nation." Thus, in contrast to modern nations where the deepest political attachment lies at the national level, for contemporary aboriginal peoples, the strongest political identity remains with the local level community. As a result, it is at the local level where most self-government arrangements will be realized.

Aboriginal political organization, however, is not limited to the local level; pan-tribal and supratribal organization also play significant roles. Pan-tribal organization refers to the political organization of local level communities at a regional level on the basis of regionally defined interests. Often pan-tribal organization develops out of necessity in order to address long term social, economic, and political regional interests as reflected in Canada through provincial Indian associations, sub-provincial tribal councils, and numbered-treaty organizations, and in Russia through oblast (provincial) and rayon (district) associations of the peoples of the North. Other times, a particular event, such as the construction of a hydro-electric dam, serves as the catalyst for aboriginal political elites to organize regionally. It is important to note that pan-tribal organization is a reflection of the particular course of aboriginal political development. Because the territorial-administrative basis of aboriginal political communities is local, not regional, primary political identity, too, is fundamentally local. As a consequence, aboriginal elite networks, not those of community members, serve as the linkages among the political communities of a region. Moreover, because pan-tribal organization develops along regional lines, it very often cuts across language and cultural area boundaries. For example, the High Level Tribal Council of northern Alberta consists of Cree and Beaver communities; the Association of the Small Peoples of the North of Chukotka consists of Even, Chukchi, and Eskimo (Yuit) communities. Nevertheless, pan-tribal organization, as in the case of the James Bay Cree, has proven extremely effective in mobilizing aboriginal interests, as well as in coordinating the implementation of self-government arrangements. Given this experience, pan-tribal level political organization very likely will play an important role in the attainment and implementation of many self-government arrangements.

Supratribal is distinct from both tribal and pan-tribal levels of organization. In contrast to tribal and pan-tribal political organization, which are built upon identities (and institutions) based on concrete communities, supratribal political organization is built upon a political identity based on the status of being aboriginal. In Canada, the essence of supratribalism is captured by its synonymous term pan-Indianism.

Supratribal organization transcends aboriginal linguistic and cultural boundaries within the borders of the modern state. Crucially, supratribal organization serves as a surrogate for nationalism among peoples of disparate language groups and cultural areas. Once again, supratribal political organization was made possible as a result of the policies of the state toward aboriginal peoples. The residential and boarding school systems, as well as other state-wide policies which treated aboriginal peoples as a single, homogeneous entity (consistent with the universalizing logic of the modern state) created powerful shared experiences among individuals of aboriginal descent, often having greater saliency than many of the traditional cultural markers that hitherto served to reinforce distinctiveness among these peoples. Further, the emergence of literacy in a single, common language (Russian in Russia; English in Canada) made the exchange of these experiences among disparate language groups possible. Finally, the technologies of mass communications provided the means by which these exchanges could develop on a national basis. Aboriginal newspapers and television and radio shows, incidentally supported directly and indirectly by state funding, provided potent fora through which an aboriginal identity could emerge *and* be forged by aboriginal elites.

Aboriginal elites created political organizations on a national basis, reflecting the development of a supratribal identities. In Canada, the emergence of effective national level aboriginal political organization did not occur until after the Second World War. The first effective organization was the National Indian Council which was formed in 1954, and in 1961 it became the official national organization for status and non-status aboriginals. In 1968, this organization split into the National Indian Brotherhood for status Indians and into the Canadian Metis Society for non-status natives (the latter organization became the Native Council of Canada in 1970). In 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood was superseded by the Assembly of First Nations, which is still the primary national organization for status Indians. In 1983, Metis from Western Canada split from the Native Council of Canada, creating the Metis National Council.[4] In Russia, the development of national native political organization is, of course, much more recent. In the spring of 1990, the Association of the Small-numbered Peoples of the North held its founding congress in Moscow, which was funded by the Soviet state and attended by Gorbachev.[5] Supratribal identity and organization cannot serve as the basis for the creation of a single subnational government for aboriginal communities scattered across the territorial expanse of Canada and Russia. Nevertheless, supratribal organization has made possible for aboriginal peoples to act against the state as a collective, if not always unified, force.

Interests

Organization defines the form and identity of a group engaged in collective action; interests explain why a group acts. Tilly observes that all too often we assume the interests of a group simply by determining which group is acting; he correctly argues that the identification of a group's interests is frequently not so simple. As Chapter One noted, many scholars view the politics of aboriginal peoples as the struggle between "haves" and "have nots." If we compare the social and economic conditions of many aboriginal communities to those of the dominant society, it is understandable, on the surface, to see why these scholars adopt this perspective. During the 1980s, the life expectancy for an Indian person in Canada was forty-three years of age; deaths due to violence, accident, or suicide were three times the national average; and only twenty-five percent of homes on reserves had indoor plumbing.[6] In 1988, in their provocative article, "The Big Problems of the Small Peoples," Pika and Prokhorov revealed a picture of aboriginal life which contrasted sharply with the hitherto official line that the social conditions of aboriginal peoples in Soviet Russia were markedly better than those of their counterparts in other industrialized countries. Social indicators in Russia were almost identical to those in Canada: the life expectancy for an aboriginal person was forty-five years, the suicide rate was three times the national average, and less than one percent of aboriginal homes had indoor plumbing (it must be kept in mind that the number of dwellings with indoor plumbing in Russia overall is much lower than in Canada).[7]

As compelling as these social conditions may be, they are not the primary reasons driving contemporary struggles for self-government. Instead, aboriginal political interests are best understood in terms of Schmitt's conception of politics as the struggle between "friends" and "enemies." The enemy is the adversary who "intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence."[8] As outlined in the previous chapter, modern states have taken exceptional measures to eliminate indigenous ways of life. The state failed in this endeavour. Today, transformed aboriginal political communities are responding to the "leviathan." The struggle for self-government fundamentally is not about "haves" and "have nots," but rather it is about protecting the way of life of aboriginal peoples (and the pursuit of power). As Bodley argues "At the outset the problem must be viewed in long-term perspective as a struggle between two incompatible cultural systems--tribes and states."[9]

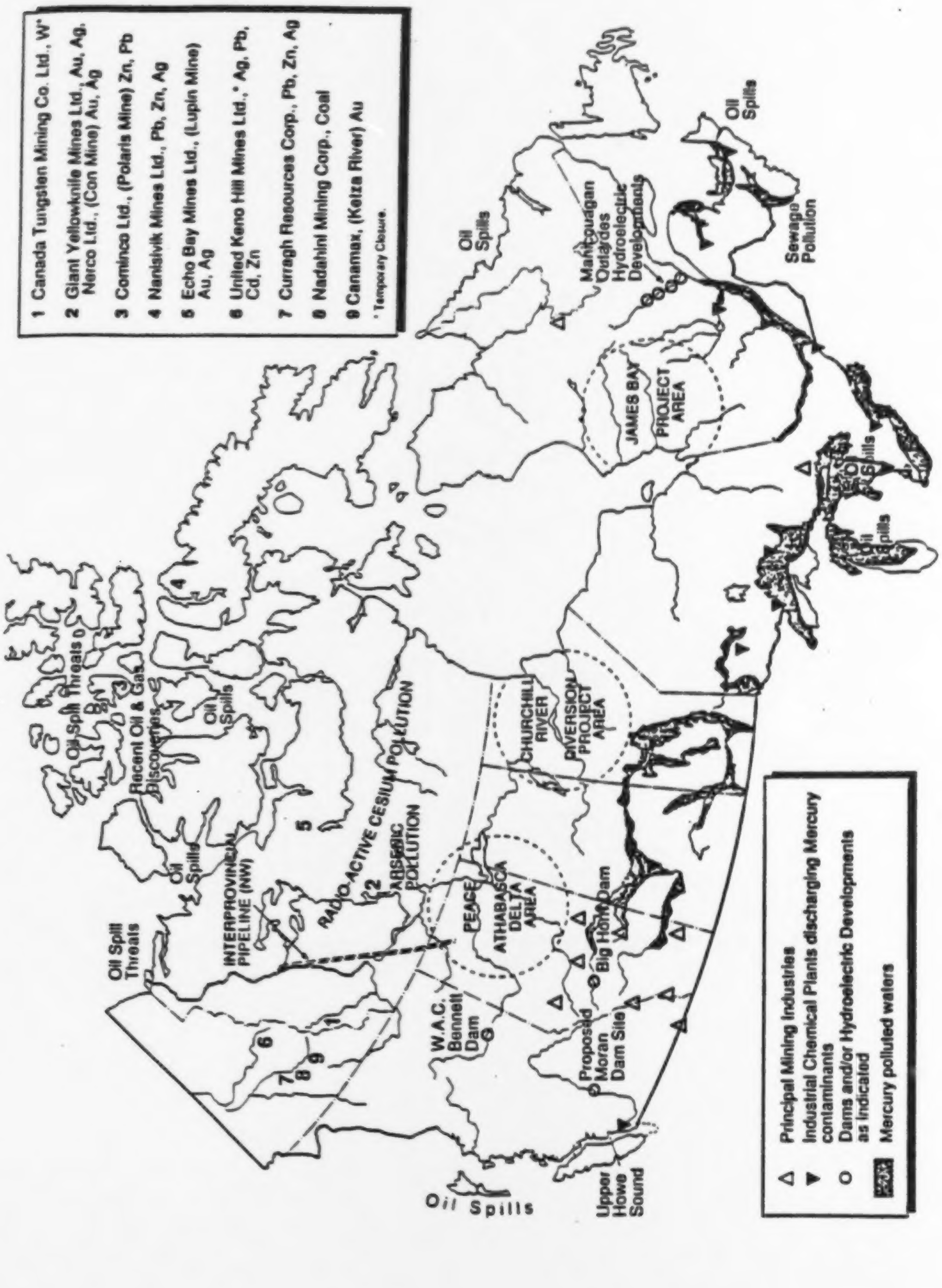
This perspective has been evident in the pronouncements of aboriginal leaders in both countries as the basis of their quest for increased rights and greater political autonomy. In Canada, the 1969 White Paper is often identified as the flash point which spurred aboriginal political elites into action. In this regard, Harold Cardinal's *The Unjust Society*, which outlined the ways in which state policy had undermined aboriginal political communities, stands out as the most important polemical statement on aboriginal-state relations in Canada of that period. Moreover, it is important to stress that, notwithstanding the serious social and economic problems facing many aboriginal communities, aboriginal leaders view reserves as political communities to be defended and enhanced, not as ghettoes to be abandoned. At a federal government hearing in 1960, for instance, when one Member of Parliament referred to reserves as "glorified concentration camps," George Manuel retorted that the "lands were 'rich in memories and tradition.' In his case, those memories were reinforced every time he fetched a pail of water from the river in front of his house and passed the deep circular excavation where his grandfather Dick Andrew, had lived in a *kekuli*, the traditional Shuswap pit-house."[10] In Russia, during the period of glasnost and perestroika in the late 1980s, similar views began to emerge as aboriginal leaders began to critically assess the consequences of Soviet policy for aboriginal peoples.[11] The Khanty writer, Eremei Aipin, drew national attention to the destruction of traditional lands used for hunting and reindeer herding caused by resource exploration and development.[12] (The extraction activities of modern states noted in the previous chapter; see Maps 4.1 and 4.2.) Others pointed out the startling decline in aboriginal language retention as a consequence of the boarding school system. In 1988, a group of prominent aboriginal writers led by the Nivkh writer, Vladimir Sangi, wrote to Gorbachev asking that measures be taken to address the serious situation of aboriginal peoples.[13] All of these issues suggest that the primary conflict is between disparate political communities--aboriginal and modern state--not between better or worse off groups of a single society.

Resources

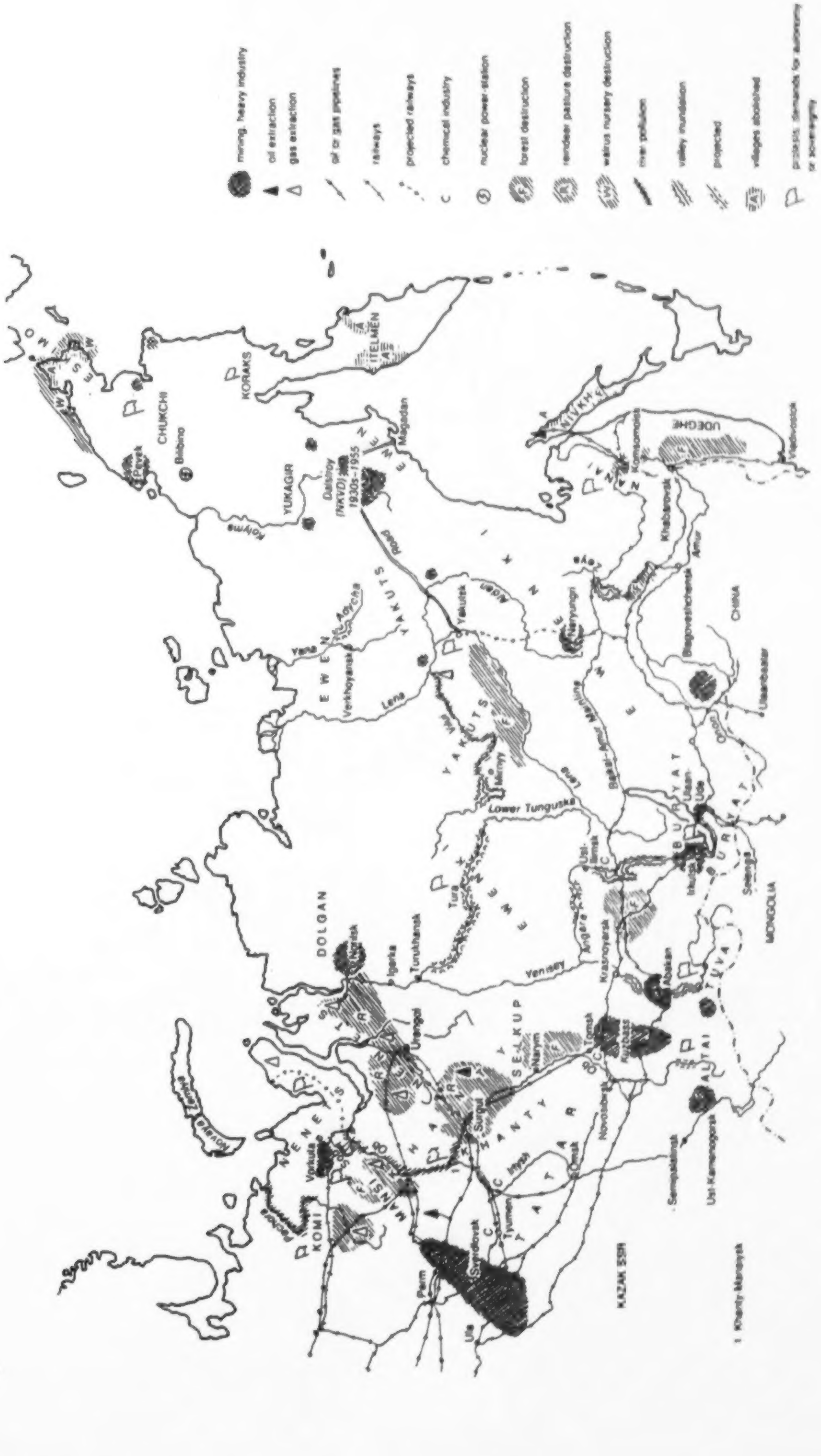
In order for political organizations to pursue their interests, they must possess resources. Resources are assets which facilitate political action and, thus, enhance a group's ability to accomplish its goals. Resources include, for example, money, time, legal skills, numbers, and organization. Compared to the dominant state and society, aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia are relatively resource poor, especially, in terms of numbers and money; nevertheless, they do possess resources. However, the struggle for self-government should not be viewed simply as using group assets in attempts to influence the state, but also as collecting those elements which constitute self-government.

Ironically, many of the resources that native people control are the unintended consequences of state policy; the most important of these are land, administrations, and skilled political leadership. Without separate

Map 4.1 *Aboriginal Peoples and Industrial Development in Canada*


1 Canada Tungsten Mining Co. Ltd., W*
2 Giant Yellowknife Mines Ltd., Au, Ag, Nerco Ltd., (Con Mine) Au, Ag
3 Cominco Ltd., (Polaris Mine) Zn, Pb
4 Nanisivik Mines Ltd., Pb, Zn, Ag
5 Echo Bay Mines Ltd., (Lupin Mine) Au, Ag
6 United Keno Hill Mines Ltd.,* Ag, Pb, Cd, Zn
7 Curragh Resources Corp., Pb, Zn, Ag
8 Nadahini Mining Corp., Coal
9 Canamax, (Ketza River) Au
* Temporary Closure.
Oil Spill Threats
Recent Oil & Gas Discoveries
Oil Spill Threats
Oil Spills
Oil Spills
INTERPROVINCIAL PIPELINE (NW)
RADIO-ACTIVE CESIUM POLLUTION
ARSENIC POLLUTION
W.A.C. Bennett Dam
PEACE
ATHABASCA DELTA AREA
CHURCHILL RIVER
DIVERSION PROJECT AREA
Oil Spills
Upper Howe Sound
Proposed Moran Dam Site
Big Horn Dam
JAMES BAY PROJECT AREA
Oil Spills
Manicouagan Outardes Hydroelectric Developments
Oil Spills
Sewage Pollution
Oil Spills
Oil Spills
Δ Principal Mining Industries
▼ Industrial Chemical Plants discharging Mercury contaminants
o Dams and/or Hydroelectric Developments as indicated
▨ Mercury polluted waters

Map 4.2 *Aboriginal Peoples and Industrial Development in Russia*


mining, heavy industry
oil extraction
gas extraction
oil or gas pipelines
railways
projected railways
chemical industry
nuclear power-station
forest destruction
reindeer pasture destruction
walrus nursery destruction
river pollution
valley inundation
projected
villages abolished
protests, demands for autonomy or sovereignty
CHUKCHI
KORAKS
ITELMEN
YUKAGIR
Bilibino
Kolyma
Dalstroy (NKVD) 1930s-1955
Magadan
Road
YAKUTS
Yakutsk
Aldan
Zeya
Yana
Adycha
Verkhoyansk
Lena
Vilyui
Mirnyy
Lower Tunguska
Baikal-Amur Mainline
NIVKH
UDEGHE
Komsomolsk
Khabarovsk
Amur
Blagoveshchensk
CHINA
Ulaanbaatar
Vladivostok
BURYAT
Ulan-Ude
Irkutsk
Selenga
MONGOLIA
Ust-Ilimsk
Angara
DOLGAN
Norilsk
Igarka
Turukhansk
Tura
Yenisey
Krasnoyarsk
Abakan
TUVA
ALTAI
SELKUP
Urengoi
Narym
Tomsk
Kuzbass
Novosibirsk
Surgut
KHANTY
TATAR
Omsk
Irtysh
Tyumen
Sverdlovsk
Perm
Ufa
Vorkuta
NENETS
KOMI
Pechora
Novaya Zemlya
KAZAK SSR
Semipalatinsk
Ust-Kamenogorsk
1. Khanty-Mansiysk

territory and government, there can be no aboriginal self-government. The territorial-administrative units, created by the state, which aboriginal peoples have occupied for the better part of this century (and longer) are one of their most important political resources. In many cases, aboriginal peoples do not have to fight for territory; they hold territory. Moreover, those who are seeking territory or an increase in the size of the territory that they hold have the well-established precedent for the existence of separate territorial-administrative units. Equally as important as territory to the pursuit of aboriginal goals is government. Above all else, governments can organize other resources for political struggle, including people. More importantly, the existence of aboriginal-staffed political offices and administrations, like territory, established precedence. Together, the occupancy of territory and the possession of institutions of local government make the threshold to acquire self-government much lower, than if aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia did not possess either of these resources. As a result, rather than focusing on the question of making radical changes to the dominant political order through the creation of new, ethnic-based governments and territories, the struggle for aboriginal self-government focuses on the question of the transfer of authority from the state to the aboriginal communities.

The state also created highly skilled political elites capable of organizing and leading struggles for self-government, through the education system and through the development of state elites of aboriginal descent. Interestingly, the aboriginal leadership in both countries reflects patterns of social power in the dominant societies. In Canada, law and business are paths to success and influence; for example, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, is a lawyer. In Russia, writers have enjoyed a social status that does not exist in North America and, historically, have used this status in their role as the voice of moral opposition to the state. The founding president of the Association of the Small-numbered Peoples of the North, Vladimir Sangi, and his successor, Eremei Aipin, are both professional writers. Further, state policy which encouraged the development of indigenous administrative cadres above the level of local communities has proven invaluable to aboriginal mobilization. For instance, George Manuel, a past-president of the National Indian Brotherhood, worked in the Department of Indian Affairs during the mid-1960s. Vladimir Etylin, who is of Chukchi origin, was the Chairman of the Okrug Soviet of the Chukotsk Autonomous Okrug and is now the Vice-President of the Association of the Small-numbered Peoples of the North.

Although territory, government, and leadership are perhaps the most important of resources that aboriginal peoples possess, other resources not directly linked to the course of aboriginal political development are also significant, especially the media and money. In both countries, the media has been extremely effective in drawing domestic and international attention to aboriginal issues. During the 1970s and 1980s, news coverage of the social and economic conditions in aboriginal communities has played a crucial role in fostering support among the general public for aboriginal issues in Canada. However, media coverage of recent native blockades in Quebec and British Columbia may have also served to erode that support. At the same time, native blockades have focused an international spotlight on aboriginal-state relations in Canada. In Russia, photo and video journalism has done much to expose the general Russian public to the desperate social conditions in many native communities. In addition to the media, money has enabled aboriginal peoples to advance their interests against the state. Financial resources, usually obtained directly and indirectly from the state, fund everything from the staff support of aboriginal organizations to the legal challenges by the aboriginal groups in the judicial system.

Opportunity

Organization, interests, and resources are necessary conditions for struggles for self-government to emerge; however, they are not sufficient. Resource mobilization theorists remind us that "the passage from condition to action [is] contingent upon the availability of resources *and* changes in the opportunities for collective action."[14] In both Canada and Russia struggles for aboriginal self-government could not take place until critical changes within the dominant society had occurred which not only allowed aboriginal peoples to mobilize politically, but also created conditions for greater receptivity by the state to aboriginal demands. The most important among these changes were the existence of a dissent permitting society, constitutional change, and responsiveness to international pressure.

Challenges to the state are not as likely to develop without a relatively dissent-permissive society. Compared to most countries around the world, the Canadian state was not overly oppressive; nevertheless, dissent was tolerated considerably more after the Second World War than before it. That tolerance of dissent in Canada was far more limited prior to the Second World War was manifested in events such as the police break-up of the Communist political rally in Toronto in 1929 and the Winnipeg Strike in 1919. However, the situation changed following the War. In the province of Quebec this was manifested in the Quiet Revolution, when the traditional institutions of power, notably the Catholic Church, lost their grip over society. For Indian peoples, the existence of a dissent-permitting society was manifested in 1951 in the removal of the 1927 provision of the Indian Act which made political organization by Indians illegal. In Russia, the development of a dissent-permitting society was much more dramatic.

During most of its life, the Soviet regime tolerated virtually no political dissent; even high profile members of the Russian intelligentsia, such as Andrei Sakharov, were not immune from the repressive organs of the state. However, as a result of Gorbachev's policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), the previous totalitarian order gave way to free debate and open criticism of state policy, which accelerated the collapse of the regime. Without increased toleration of dissent, aboriginal peoples would not have been able to organize collectively, let alone advance their interests against the state.

Another condition that provided for the opportunity to pursue self-government was constitutional change. Since 1970 in Canada and 1987 in Russia, constitutional change has been central to national political debate. In both countries, sub-national governments are seeking to increase their powers vis-a-vis central governments in Ottawa and Moscow through constitutional change of the division of powers, placing the nature of the respective federal systems on the table for discussion. These developments give aboriginal peoples in both countries a critical window of opportunity to restructure their own relationship within the state. For aboriginal peoples in Canada, this has resulted in the recognition of aboriginal rights, albeit vaguely defined, in Section 35 of the 1982 Constitution and, in turn, has strengthened current aboriginal claims for self-government. The notion of a third order of government for aboriginal peoples, for instance, is often discussed within the context of broader constitutional debate. For native peoples in Russia, constitutional change, too, has led to the formal recognition of special aboriginal political rights in Article 69 of the 1993 Constitution. As in Canada, these rights remain unspecified; nevertheless, they do represent an important breakthrough in terms of formal recognition by the state of aboriginal claims. In Russia, aboriginal self-government is discussed within the context of the broader debate regarding the development of local and regional public self-government. Importantly, without these broader debates regarding the constitutional division of power within the respective federal states, it is very likely that aboriginal demands for greater political autonomy in both countries would not be entertained.

Finally, international pressure to accommodate aboriginal interests has played an increasingly important role in the opportunity for aboriginal peoples to advance their interests. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, aboriginal elites in Canada drew international attention to the political, social, and economic situation of aboriginal peoples. Sometimes the forum was the United Nations, other times the British parliament or the European Community. Often parallels were made between the situation of Blacks in South Africa and that of Indians in Canada. Whether valid or not, the efforts to draw these parallels placed the Canadian government in an embarrassing position, increasing the pressure to address aboriginal concerns. Until the Gorbachev period, Soviet Russia was far more immune than Canada to international pressures on state policy. However, since the period of Gorbachev's attempt to reform the Soviet system and, especially, since the collapse of the Soviet regime, as Russia moves toward a market economy and democratic political institutions, Russia has become increasingly responsive to pressure from abroad. As a consequence, native peoples in Russia have been able to take advantage of this new responsiveness in advancing their interests against the state.

Outcomes

Outcomes of the struggle for self-government have already been achieved by a number of aboriginal communities in both countries. In Canada, the James Bay Cree of Quebec and the Sechelt Band of British Columbia represent pioneering examples of territorial-based aboriginal self-government. In Russia, aboriginal peoples in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) have had the greatest successes to date. In that republic, self-governing, territorial-based *rodovaya obshchina*s (clan communities) have been created on the territories of former soviets. Notwithstanding the often lamented lack of progress on the question of self-government, the successes accomplished to date by native peoples in both countries represent rare achievements in comparative perspective. In both cases, the course of aboriginal political development and the logic of federalism have been pivotal to these successes; together, they also explain the forms of aboriginal self-government arrangements achieved to date and those likely to be achieved in the future.

This study has argued that aboriginal political life was transformed in the attempt by the state to eliminate frontier areas and, along with them, indigenous ways of life. In the process, peoples without government were transformed into peoples with government. The transformation of aboriginal peoples, moreover, was not simply a process of eliminating aboriginal ways of life, but was also an endeavour to replace aboriginal values and practices with those of the dominant state and society: the state attempted to transform aboriginal peoples in its own image. That is the nature of domination. As Simmel observes,

> Nobody, in general, wishes that his influence completely determine the other individual. He rather wants his influence, this determination of the other, to act back upon *him*. Even the abstract will-to-dominate, therefore is a case of interaction. This will draws its satisfaction from the fact that the acting or suffering of the other, his positive or negative condition, offers itself to the dominator as the product of *his* will.[15]

Aboriginal peoples have reacted to the state, but not in ways intended by the "leviathan." Critically, the institution of government has become a reality in aboriginal communities today and self-government arrangements will constitute an integration of contemporary aboriginal institutions of government into the framework of the modern state. In this regard, those bands in Canada in Treaties 6 (central Alberta and central Saskatchewan) and 8 (northern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia, and northwestern Saskatchewan) which have rejected self-government in the form of a third order of government have been absolutely correct in their assessment of the implications of such a model. However, there are few alternatives. The logic of the modern state will not allow completely autonomous political communities to exist within the territories over which it claims domination. At the same time, however, aboriginal peoples have not been incorporated in the fabric of political and social life of the dominant society. Many of the values and practices of aboriginal peoples have survived, not in spite of the policies of the state, but because of these policies. This is the legacy of the segregationist policies of the federal state. Thus, in critical ways, aboriginal peoples, remain on the frontier of the dominant political order; the state has not succeeded in its endeavour. Aboriginal self-government, therefore, provides an arrangement for coexistence between two incompatible cultural systems. The governments of aboriginal communities will be integrated, but aboriginal peoples will not inevitably be incorporated into the dominant society.

What forms are self-government arrangements likely to take? Notwithstanding the rhetoric of some aboriginal leaders, aboriginal political communities will not be sovereign nations within the Canadian and Russian states. Nor, on the other hand, will they be "equal" just like all other Canadian and Russian citizens, as some opponents of aboriginal self-government would have it. If the basis of the struggle for aboriginal self-government is about protecting a way of life, then it is reasonable to expect aboriginal political communities to gain decision making authority over those areas that they feel are critical to their survival as distinct peoples. An obvious area for consideration is education, where the issue of language is important to many communities; another is social welfare where issues such as custom adoption have gained increasing attention. Where traditional subsistence activities continue to play an important role in community life, co-management of resources and lands is very likely. None of these areas, however, represents radical departures from the debate over jurisdiction between other orders of government in Canada (between the federal and provincial governments) and in Russia (between the federal and oblast governments). Moreover, it is also likely that the decision making powers that aboriginal communities assume will vary significantly with the needs, aspirations, *and* capacities of individual communities. But, whether or not aboriginal political communities achieve increased political autonomy may have significant consequences for their survival as distinct peoples.

Norway and Japan as Contrasts

The consequences of state organization for aboriginal self-determination made even clearer when Canada and Russia are contrasted with Norway and Japan. In the case of the Sami or Ainu, it is unlikely that either of these peoples will ever achieve territorial-based self-government. Nevertheless, both the Sami and the Ainu are attempting secure greater rights with the Norwegian and Japanese states. Gurr suggests that ethnic minority claims can be grouped into four sets of rights: political autonomy, either within a state, or secession from it; political rights, including equal civil rights or greater political representation; economic rights, such as protection of land or greater access to economic opportunities; and cultural rights, for instance, formal recognition of language and culture.[16] Without existing territorial-administrative bases, both the Sami and Ainu lack a critical resource to secure political autonomy. Moreover, the notion of creating ethnic, sub-national, territorial-based governments is antithetical to the political culture of unitary states. As a consequence, struggles for aboriginal self-determination within Japan and Norway have focused on securing the latter three sets of rights.

Sami political organization has a long history, dating back to the turn of the century. But it was not until 1968 that the first Sami association, the NSR (Norga Samiid Riikasaervi-Norske Samers Riksforbund), was founded to represent Sami interests on a national level.[17] Prior to the 1980s the Sami made modest progress in their quest for political, economic, and cultural rights. An important turning point in the Sami political movement was the Alta controversy. In the late 1970s the Norwegian state planned to build a hydro-electric dam on the Alta River in northern Norway. Building the dam would mean the flooding of reindeer pastures. In 1979, in an effort to block the project, a number of Sami held hunger strikes and staged protests in Oslo. These tactics attracted international attention. To diffuse the situation, the state created a Sami Rights Committee. While the Sami eventually lost in court on the Alta project, they did manage to get Sami issues onto the national agenda. Since then, the Sami have had three successes of note. First, in 1988, the Storting ratified Article 110a of the constitution which states: "It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life."[18] Second, in 1989, the first Norwegian Sami Parliament was elected. While this body has no authoritative powers and is strictly consultative, it is an important step in the recognition of Sami interests. Third, in 1990, Norway ratified the ILO

Convention No. 169 which addresses the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. Although the Sami may never gain self-government, they may have secured sufficient room to revive their culture in order to persist as a distinct people.

In sharp contrast, the situation of the Ainu is very grim. Starting in the 1970s, members of the Ainu intelligentsia have endeavoured to raise Ainu ethnic consciousness. In 1977, Tokuhei Narita, an Ainu activist, stood for national election and received 55,000 votes, though not enough to be elected. Some Ainu leaders are attempting to revive the Ainu language and culture through an Ainu museum and special Ainu language and dance classes. But the path is an arduous one. To this day, the Japanese state does not recognize the Ainu as an extant, distinct people. "Most commentators seem to accept that the Ainu will inevitably disappear as a unique culture and way of life and will assimilate with the Japanese mainstream."[19]

Conclusion

One of the central arguments advanced in this study is that the struggle for aboriginal self-government is a sociopolitical episode. Episodes are "processes of social change that have a definite direction and form, and in which definite structural transformation occur."[20] Modern state-building marked the end of aboriginal peoples as anarchical political communities and set in motion processes that would lead to the transformation of aboriginal peoples into peoples with government. The policies pursued by the state sought to undermine the political autonomy of aboriginal peoples. However, instead of accelerating the death of aboriginal peoples as distinct political communities, the structures of domination imposed by the state (that is, separate territorial-administrative units in the form of reserves and soviets) created the foundations for the rebirth of aboriginal peoples' quest of self-determination. Commenting on the nature of social change, Simmel writes:

> History, as an empirical science, concerns itself with changes in the forms of culture, and aims to discover the real carriers and causes of change in each particular case. But, we can also discern a deeper process at work. Life, as we have said, can manifest itself only in particular forms; yet, owing to its essential restlessness, life constantly struggles against its own products, which have become fixed and do not move along with it. This process manifests itself as the displacement of an old form by a new one. . . . It moves constantly between death and resurrection--between resurrection and death.[21]

The struggle for aboriginal self-government represents the resurrection of peoples once destined for extinction.

Thus far, this study has examined the struggle for aboriginal self-government at what Tilly calls the macrohistorical level.[22] The analysis now turns to the microhistorical level, that is, the level of individual communities. Chapter Five compares aboriginal political development in the Evenk community of Tyanya and the Metis community of Gift Lake; Chapter Six examines the views of community members as they embark on the path of self-government.

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[1] Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1993), 68.

[2] Stephen Cornell, "The transformation of tribe: organization and self-concept in Native American ethnicities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11, no. 1 (January 1988): 27. While Cornell is referring to the Indians of the United States, his observation is just as applicable to the indigenous peoples of Canada and Russia.

[3] See Joane Nagel, "The Political Mobilization of Native Americans," *The Social Science Journal* 19, no. 3 (July 1982): 37-46; Stephen Cornell, *The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 106-127; Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 85-88. The terms for the different levels of aboriginal political organization are arbitrary. In North America, the term pan-Indian is often used in place of supratribal. The problem with this term is that it is not readily transferable; therefore, the term supratribal is used instead.

[4] James S. Frideres, *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts*, 3rd ed. (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1988), 260-294.

[5] *Materialy c"ezda malochislennykh narodov Severa* (Moscow: n.p., 1990).

[6] Don Carmichael, Tom Pocklington, and Greg Pyrcz, *Democracy and Rights in Canada* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada, 1991), 178-79.

[7] A. Pika and B. Prokhorov, "The Big Problems of the Small Peoples," *Kommunist*, no. 16 (1988): 76-83.

[8] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 27.

[9] John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 3rd ed. (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1990), 3.

[10] Peter McFarlane, *Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the Making of the Modern Indian Movement* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1993), 19-20.

[11] See for instance V. Sangi, "Mnenie ob ostroy probleme otchuzhdenie," *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 11 September 1988; Margaita Lomunova, "Sever Ctavit Problemy," *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, 22 April 1988; V. Komorov, "U Narodnostey Severa," *Sel'skaya Zhizn'*, 27 October 1988.

[12] Yeremei Aipin, "Not by oil alone," *Moscow News Weekly*, no. 2 (1989), as published in *IWGIA Newsletter*, no. 57 (May 1989).

[13] "Native Northerners Eye Their Rights," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 42, no. 29 (1990).

[14] Eduardo Canel, "New Social Movement Theory and Resource Mobilization: The Need for Integration," in *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice*, ed. William K. Carroll (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1992), 24; italics are mine.

[15] Georg Simmel, "Domination," in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 96.

[16] Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, 71-72.

[17] Erkki Asp, Kari Rantanen, and Aila Munter, *The Lapps and the Lappish Culture* (Turku: University of Turku, 1980), 57.

[18] Elina Helander, *The Sami of Norway* (Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1992), 1.

[19] George A. De Vos and William O. Wetherall, *Japan's Minorities: Burakumin, Koreans, Ainu and Okinawans* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1983).

[20] Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 23.

[21] Georg Simmel, "The Conflict in Modern Culture," in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 376.

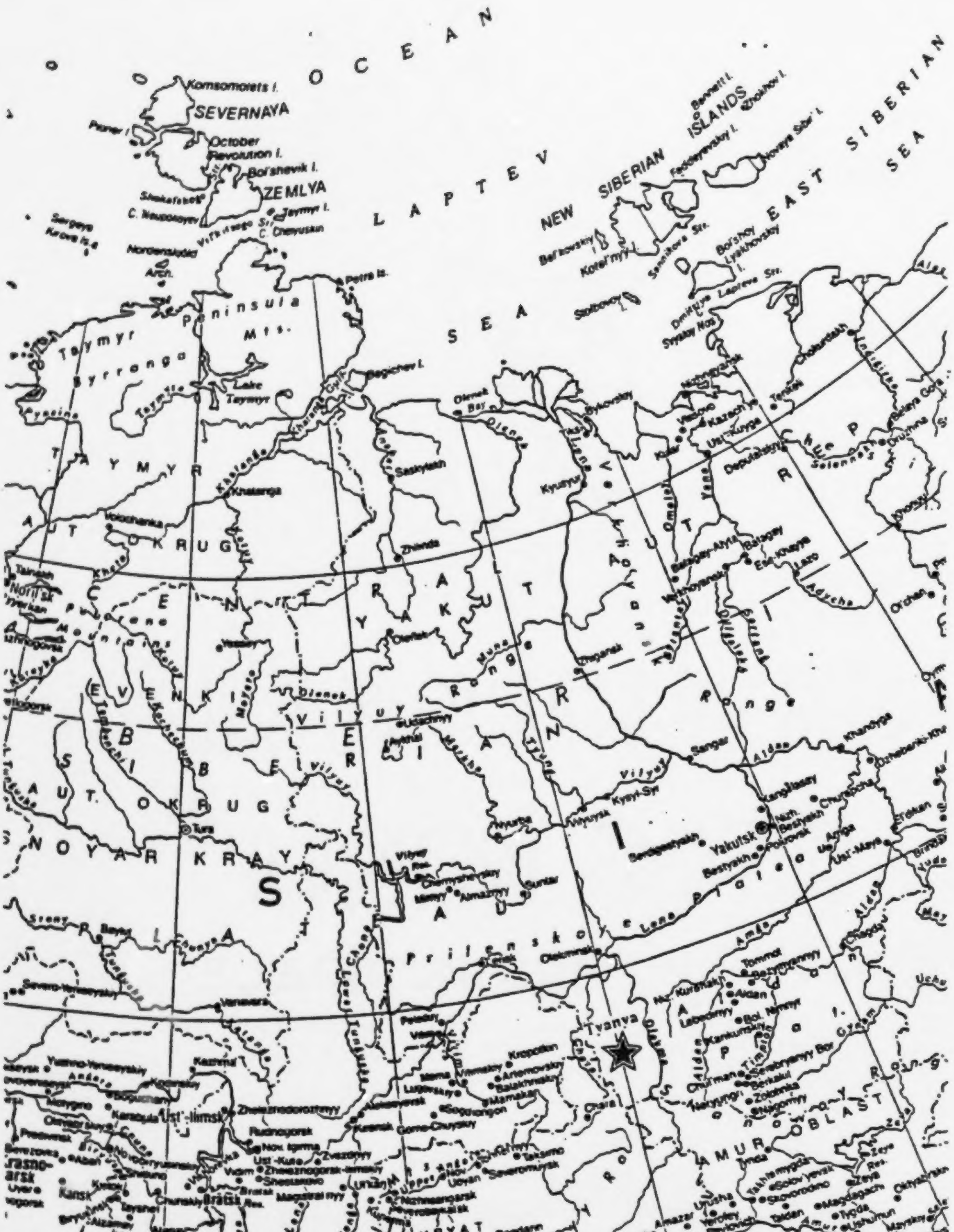
[22] Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), 61.

CHAPTER FIVE
Tyanya and Gift Lake

In contrast to the analysis presented thus far in this study, which has focused at the macrohistorical level, this chapter, based on field work conducted in two aboriginal communities, proceeds at the microhistorical level.[1] Tyanya, an Evenk community in eastern Siberia, and Gift Lake, a Metis community in northwestern Canada, serve as the comparative referents. Tilly explains that "at the **macrohistorical** level, we seek to account for particular big structures and large processes [for example, state-building] and to chart their alternate forms. At the **microhistorical** level, we trace the encounters of individuals and groups with those structures and processes, with the hope of explaining how people actually experienced them."[2] By wading in at the microhistorical level, a more intimate understanding can be gleaned of the transformation of aboriginal political life which resulted from modern state-building. While in the real world there are no perfectly paired cases, Tyanya and Gift Lake lend themselves well to comparative analysis for several reasons. Tyanya and Gift Lake are both relatively isolated and traditional compared to aboriginal communities lying closer to major population and industrial centres. The two communities share the same or similar traditional economic pursuits (both hunt moose and Canada geese, for instance) as they are located in boreal forest (taiga) regions at comparable latitudes (Tyanya is approximately two degrees north of Gift Lake). In terms of population, they are very similar in size, between five and seven hundred people. And, importantly, they recently achieved self-government.

Tyanya is located in the Olekminsk District, in the southwest corner of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), 280 km south of the district administrative centre, Olekminsk (pop. 11,000). (See Map 5.1) Tyanya is the population centre of the Tyanskiy Soviet, which has a total area of 23,994 square kilometres. Nestled among the pines and larch of the taiga forest, Tyanya sits on the left bank of the Tyanya River, not far from its confluence with the Tokko River. From the other side of the Tyanya River, a small mountain overlooks the village, completing the postcard setting. The settlement is accessible from Olekminsk, during the summer, only by air or river and, during winter, by air. The Tyanya and Tokko Rivers serve as the primary, local transportation routes during the summer. As Tyanya is located in southern Yakutia, the winters are markedly warmer than in the capital of the republic, Yakutsk: when it is fifty below (centigrade) in Yakutsk, it is only thirty below in Tyanya, though the temperature can fall below forty degrees. Most of the present-day community members of Tyanya are descendants of the Evenk clans of southwestern Yakutia who inhabited the basin of the Tokko, Torgo and Cheruoda Rivers--referred to

Map 5.1 *Tyanya*


OCEAN
Komsomolets I.
SEVERNAYA
October Revolution I.
Bol'shevik I.
ZEMLYA
LAPTEV
SEA
NEW SIBERIAN ISLANDS
EAST SIBERIAN
SEA
Taymyr Peninsula
Byrranga Mts.
Lake Taymyr
TAYMYR AUT. OKRUG
Khatanga
Noril'sk
CENTRAL
YAKUT
SIBERIAN
EVENKI AUT. OKRUG
Tura
KRASNOYARSK KRAY
Vilyuy
Lena
Aldan
Yakutsk
Prilenskoye Plateau
Olekminsk
Tyanya
Chara
AMUR OBLAST
BURYAT
Bratsk
Ust'-Ilimsk
Vitim
Tynda
Bodaybo
Mogocha
Verkhoyansk
Sangar
Zhigansk
Olenek
Mirnyy
Kirensk
Zeya

as the Tokkinskiy Evenk by Russian (Soviet) anthropologists. According to oral tradition, the first families of the Tokkinskiy Evenk came to the Tyanya area between 1850 and 1860.[3] By 1931, it was estimated that some 60 Evenk families, numbering about 300 people were living in the Tokko-Tyanya River Basin.[4] In 1991, the population of the settlement was 557, seventy percent of whom were Evenk; the rest are predominantly Yakut.

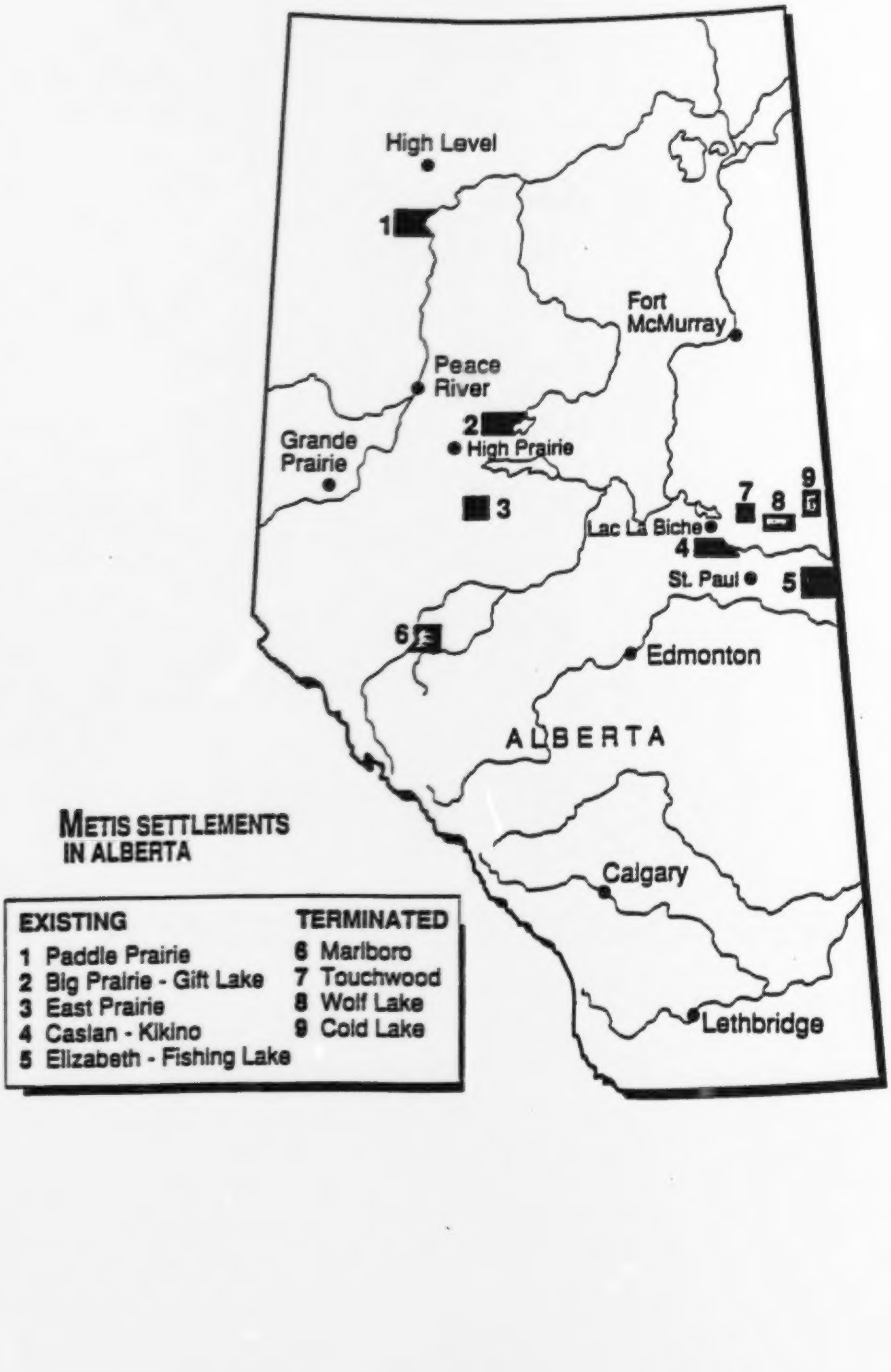
Gift Lake Metis Settlement is located in northern Alberta, northwest of Lesser Slave Lake, and has a total area of 840 square kilometres (see Map 5.2). Most of its residents live in the settlement village which extends out from the east shore of the lake that gives the settlement its name. The land is dominated by rolling hills and is treed by spruce, poplar, birch and tammarack. A number of small lakes and ponds dot the territory of the settlement, and a large lake, which used to support a vibrant commercial fishery, abuts its eastern border. Of the eight Metis settlements in Alberta, Gift Lake is one of the most remote. It is accessible from the major town in the area, High Prairie (pop. 3,000), by a secondary highway which cuts through the settlement (and which was paved only in the last decade). The summers are quite warm, but in winter the temperature can drop to forty below (centigrade). Most of the residents of Gift Lake settlement are descendants of Cree and Cree-speaking Metis families who lived in the area north of Lesser Slave Lake.[5] Although Metis people have lived in this general area for some time, the first Metis to settle continuously in the Gift Lake area arrived in 1878.[6] By the 1920s other families began to settle there, as well, and by 1942 six families were living at Gift Lake. In 1993, the population of the settlement was 697, almost all of whom consider themselves Metis.

Aboriginal Life on the Eve of Modern State-Building

At the beginning of this century, neither Tyanya nor Gift Lake existed as aboriginal settlements. Tyanya was a small, trading post inhabited by a half dozen Yakut families, and Gift Lake was inhabited by only a couple of Metis families. Tyanya and Gift Lake, as in the case of many contemporary aboriginal settlements, came into existence only as a result of the momentous changes in aboriginal life precipitated by modern state-building. To understand the profundity of these changes, it is necessary, first, to examine briefly Evenk and Metis life on the eve of modern state-building.

At the time of the Russian Revolution, the Tokkinskiy Evenk, in common with other indigenous peoples of the Russian North, still lived a tribal way of life. Commenting on the situation in Yakutia in the early 1920s, M. P. Sokolov wrote: "With few exceptions they [Evenk], up to now, have not changed their indigenous ways of life and almost all are nomadic trappers."[7] The Tokkinskiy Evenk were primarily hunter-

Map 5.2 *Gift Lake*


High Level
Fort McMurray
Peace River
Grande Prairie
High Prairie
Lac La Biche
St. Paul
Edmonton
ALBERTA
Calgary
Lethbridge
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METIS SETTLEMENTS IN ALBERTA
EXISTING
1 Paddle Prairie
2 Big Prairie - Gift Lake
3 East Prairie
4 Caslan - Kikino
5 Elizabeth - Fishing Lake
TERMINATED
6 Marlboro
7 Touchwood
8 Wolf Lake
9 Cold Lake

gatherers and, in contrast to Evenk who lived on the tundra, did not practise intensive reindeer-breeding. Small herds of reindeer were kept, but were limited to the purposes of transportation, clothing, milk, and a supplemental meat supply. Instead, the taiga Evenk primarily hunted wild reindeer, moose, and elk; fished char and trout; and gathered berries, mushrooms, and other edible plants. This way of life, based on hunter-gathering and pastoralism, required the Evenk to live in small, nomadic social collectivities. These collectivities or clans were patriarchical and often consisted of only one or two families, rarely more than several. The Metanka clan, for example, one of the original clans to locate in the Tyanya area, consisted of one father and the families of his four sons.[8] Given the small size of Evenk social collectivities, there were no formal, authoritative, decision-making structures. To the extent that decisions had to be reached within a clan or among clans, traditionally, they were arrived at by consensus or mutual understandings. It is also important to note some important intercultural exchanges resulting from the northern migration of the Yakut people into territories inhabited by the Evenk, several centuries prior to Russian colonization. One of these was the adoption of the Yakut knife (which had a metal blade) as a standard piece of hunting equipment. More significant was the adoption of the Yakut language for trade and, eventually, in everyday usage by many Evenk.[9] In one district of southern Yakutia it was reported in the early 1930s that "[e]very single one of these nomadic Evenk knows the Yakut language. Most of these nomadic Evenk have forgotten their native Evenk language. . . . it is clear although they are 'nomadic' the Yakut language has become their native language."[10] Despite these cultural changes, Evenk socio-political organization endured.

In the early part of this century, the Metis of northern Alberta also still lived a nomadic, tribal way of life. Most Metis hunted moose and deer, harvested whitefish, and gathered berries and other bush food; collected herbs and roots for medicine; and trapped fur to exchange for supplies, such as flour and ammunition. Even as late as the 1930s, these traditional activities persisted as the primary economic pursuits of northern Alberta Metis. In his petition to the Alberta provincial government requesting free and unrestricted access to trapping, the prominent Metis leader, J.F. Dion, noted: "the Metis and non-Treaty Indians being by nature of a transient and migratory disposition, trap over very large areas carrying their equipment by dog team and establishing progressive camps as they travel through the country. Moreover, the Metis and non-Treaty Indians depend almost entirely for their livelihood upon their trapping activities . . ."[11] Along with nomadism, the northern Alberta Metis shared other important elements of social organization with the Evenk. Crucially, the primary unit of social and political life was the family clan. As well, beyond the family unit, social organization was fluid and there were no formal, decision-making structures. Families set up camp where they chose and trapping areas were acknowledged by mutual respect. In these regards Metis life was similar to traditional ways of life of Indians such as the Cree and Dene, with one exception. The mixed heritage of the Metis people resulted in Christianity, not shamanism, providing the primary basis of spirituality for many Metis. This distinction is still evident today.

Why were the Evenk and Metis able to maintain traditional ways of life into the first part of this century? Prior to modern state-building, Tsarist Yakutia and pre-Confederation Alberta[12] were primary settlement frontiers: regions where a state is expanding outwards into territory previously either having virtually no inhabitants, or populated by tribal communities, in which the political authority of the centre is diffuse or thinly spread. Subject to limited control by pre-modern political orders, the Evenk and Metis were able to carve out considerable political and cultural autonomy. This situation changed dramatically, however, with the development of modern states in Russia and Canada.

State Policy and Aboriginal Political Development

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the modern states that emerged in Russia, following the October Revolution in 1917, and in Canada, following Confederation in 1867, shared critical similarities. In contrast to the political orders that preceded them, modern states in Russia and Canada possessed both a universalizing political logic, and an organizational capacity to pursue this logic. The organizational capacity was manifest in the creation of highly centralized, bureaucratic, administrative organs. The universalizing political logic was reflected in, among other things, the creation of universal citizenship. It was also reflected in the efforts by Canadian and Soviet state-builders to transform frontier areas into bordered territories. This latter undertaking required establishing effective surveillance and internal pacification over the entire territorial expanse of the state, including its most remote regions and populations. From this perspective, aboriginal peoples represented an exceptional challenge, especially in terms of their nomadism and perceived "backwardness." In both countries, the state developed institutions and policies to meet this challenge.

In the Yakut ASSR,[13] the "Native question" became a central concern of state policy following the creation of the Committee of the North at the federal level in 1925. This committee was the primary state organ charged with developing and overseeing state policy toward aboriginal peoples. The directives of the Committee of the North were, first, to address the social crisis confronting many aboriginal peoples in the Russian North as a consequence of the devastation wrought by the Revolution and Civil War, especially the decimation of reindeer herds and fur-bearing animals, and, second, to develop a strategy to incorporate the 'Small Peoples of the North' in the new political order. While aboriginal policy was developed by the central government, its implementation was carried out by regional administrations. In 1925, the Yakut ASSR created the Committee for the Affairs of the Small Native Peoples to oversee implementation, marking the beginning of a concerted effort to tackle the Native question.

Change in all other dimensions of aboriginal life depended, first, upon addressing the political dimension. If the state was to maintain effective surveillance and internal pacification over aboriginal populations, nomadism and egalitarianism had to be checked and transformed. Accordingly, aboriginal peoples were organized into a succession of territorial-administrative units. These successive changes were, in part, a consequence of general changes in the structural organization of the state, but they were also a result of the increasing control exercised by the state over indigenous peoples. Prior to 1925, the clans which made up the Tokkinskiy Evenk fell within the administrative jurisdiction of the Charo-Olekminskiy Rayon of the Aldanskiy Okrug.[14] In 1925, the rayon was transferred to the Olekmiskiy Okrug. At that time, the Tokkinskiy Evenk, along with three other clan groups were organized into *clan soviets* within the rayon.[15] As administrative units, clan soviets simply reflected existing Evenk sociopolitical organization and, de facto, were not new forms of political organization. Moreover, clan soviets were not fixed *territorially*; rather, they were mobile political *administrative* units within the rayon-level territorial-administration. Importantly, the nature of *clan* soviets underscored the limited power of the Soviet state over its frontier regions.

With the rise of Stalin, the power of the centre waxed and the state began to consolidate its rule in the regions. This change was reflected in territorial-administrative changes in the regions and among aboriginal communities. At the district level, okrugs were eliminated in the late 1920s, as a meso-order of administration within the Yakut ASSR; the Olekminskiy Okrug became the Olekminskiy Rayon on January 9, 1930,[16] and for the next seven years the Evenk remained under the jurisdiction of the Olekminskiy Rayon. In 1937, the Tokkinskiy Rayon, which was composed overwhelmingly of Evenk and Yakut, was created from the Olekminskiy and Tommotskiy (now part of the Aladanskiy Rayon) Rayons.[17] For nearly two decades, the Evenk of Tyanya would fall within the jurisdiction of this original peoples dominated, territorial-administrative unit.

At the local level, political change was felt more directly. In the 1930s, clan soviets were abolished, and the state started denomadizing the Evenk and began building institutions of local government. No other changes in Evenk life would be as radical. The Evenk were organized into the Tokkinskiy Village Soviet, modelled along the lines of village soviets throughout rural Russia. However, the soviet retained its clan name, as was the case of the neighbouring Kindigirskiy Village Soviet, thus, maintaining its aboriginal identity. The Evenk were encouraged to live in one of two settlements within the soviet: Tyanya or POS (Trapping and Hunting Station), which was south of Tyanya on the Tokko River. The results of this process were not instantaneous, however: by 1940, at Tyanya only 18 of 46 households and at POS only 3 of 30 households lived in permanent dwellings, the rest still lived a nomadic way of life.[18] Nevertheless, Evenk were now unambiguously subject to the authority of the local soviet council. From this time forward, decisions affecting community life were made authoritatively, not by consensus. In 1949, near the end of Stalin's rule, Tyanya and POS continued to exist as two separate settlements of roughly similar size. Then, the population of Tyanya was 136 and POS 117, about 74% and 78% of whom, respectively, were Evenk, the rest being mainly Yakut.[19]

During the Khrushchev period, the Evenk were to experience further dramatic changes; however, notwithstanding the scale of these changes, they were of degree, rather than kind. At the district level, the Tokkinskiy Rayon was consolidated in 1953 with the Olekminskiy Rayon which had a substantial Russian population.[20] More dramatic were the changes that occurred at the local level, especially, the process of villagization in which smaller, often semi-nomadic communities, were amalgamated into a single, larger settlement. Villagization was seen as pivotal to the accelerated assimilation of aboriginal peoples into Soviet society. It also made surveillance and internal pacification easier to accomplish. As a consequence, POS was disbanded and its residents were moved to Tyanya. Further, all residents at Tyanya were settled in permanent dwellings. The 1950s and early 1960s, thus, were very significant for the Tokkinskiy Evenk: it marked the end of a nomadic way of life. Between the 1960s and early 1990s, other than the change in the name of the soviet from Tokkinskiy (after the clan) to Tyanskiy (after the village) the administrative and territorial organization of the Evenk of Tyanya changed very little. By 1967, the population of Tyanya was 398.[21]

During the same period state builders were transforming Evenk political organization, they wasted no less effort changing Evenk economic organization. Even after clan soviets were established in the 1920s, traditional-based economies remained fundamentally important to the Evenk of southwestern Yakutia. As one government report noted: "Trapping, mainly, is the principal pursuit of the Tungus [Evenk] population of the Charo-Olekminskiy Rayon . . . ." Another report stated that the main "pursuits of the Tungus [Evenk] population is reindeer-herding and trapping, and secondarily fishing."[22] The importance of traditional economies was reflected in annual harvest and reindeer herd figures: In one year, during the 1920s, 267,580 squirrels, 1,380 Siberia weasels, 1,735 ermines, 15 wolves, 90 foxes, 5 wolverines, 3 sables, 100 wild reindeer, 454 moose, 26 bears, and 15 elk were harvested in the Charo-Olekminskiy Rayon.[23] As well, in 1931, it was estimated that there were 1,800 reindeer in the district or about 30 head of reindeer per Evenk household.[24] However, in a state which intended to build an economy more advanced than capitalism, traditional pursuits were both anachronistic and peripheral to the dominant economy.

In the 1930s Soviet Russia, economic development meant industrialization in the urban centres and collectivization in the rural regions. Yakutia was not exempted from these processes. However, because the Evenk, as an aboriginal people, were perceived to be 'extremely backward', their integration into the Soviet economy had to take place in stages. Thus, while trapping, hunting and reindeer herding would continue as primary economic activities, their mode of organization would be socialist. By 1930, an initial attempt at integrating the Evenk into the dominant economy was made through the creation of the Tokkinskiy Hunting-Herding State Farm.[25] Through this artel, Evenk hunters and herders could exchange furs and meat for basic supplies. However, it did little in terms of reorganizing the manner in which furs were collected and reindeer were herded.

However, the next stage of economic development--collectivization--had a more significant impact on Evenk lives. Each household was required to give all or part of their reindeer herd to the state. Those who refused were repressed. Those who gave now became employees of the state, herding the state's reindeer. By 1938, two collective farms were established in the Tokkinskiy Soviet--Novaya Zhizn' (New Life) located in Tyanya and Perviy Shag (First Step) located in POS. In contrast to farms in the Russian heartland, the period of collectivization in the North was much longer, and it was not until after the Second World War that collectivization of reindeer herds in Yakutia was complete. In addition to the immediate question of the 'ownership of the means of production' transfering from individual families to the state, collectivization had two other important consequences. First, collectivization was a vehicle to change patterns of economic activity: instead of herding constituting a secondary, albeit very important, part of Evenk life, herding (organized like ranching) was intended to become the primary basis of the local economy. Second, reindeer herding was a vehicle for changing social organization: instead of families herding together, women were to remain in the villages with the children, and men were to herd reindeer in brigades. Along with reindeer herding, hunting and trapping, the two primary economic pursuits of the Evenk, were collectivized. Before collectivization, the economic roles of women and men were much more equal, often women hunted alongside men, for instance. After collectivization, a sharp gender division of labour emerged.

Although it is important to outline the changes that occurred during the Soviet period, it is equally important to note those elements of traditional Evenk economy that endured. Even if the organization of traditional subsistence activities transformed, many of the skills of hunting, herding, and fishing were not. Moreover, the unofficial economy of Tyanya thrived throughout the Soviet period. This unofficial economy included not only hunting and trapping, which ran parallel to the official economy, but also such activities as berry picking which, though not counted in official statistics, were central to basic Evenk life. Thus, traditional and state organized economies existed side by side.

Along with political and economic development, the Evenk of Tyanya experienced social development Soviet style. Following the Revolution Soviet officials were candid, if not tactful, in their assessment of the cultural status of Evenk people. In an early government report, it was observed, for instance, that "literacy among the Evenk in the 1920s was extremely rare and among them reigns complete darkness and ignorance; they border on a state of being primitive people."[26] Given the relative isolation of the Tokkinskiy Evenk, it is no surprise that access to education and health services was non-existent at the beginning of this century. Throughout the 1920s, for instance, there was no medical station in the Charo-Olekminskiy Rayon, and a nursing station in Tyanya itself was built only after the War.[27] In 1949 mail and supplies were still transported only during summer via the Chara and Tokko Rivers from Olekminsk.[28] According to state officials, this 'darkness and ignorance' had to be conquered. The key was the education system. Accordingly, the state built two schools in Tyanya: an elementary school which could hold up to 80 students (in 1951), as well as a residential school for children whose parents worked with the reindeer herds.[29] Following the 1957 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Central Committee of the CPSU "On Measures for the Further Development of the Economy and Culture of the Peoples of the Far North,"[30] the republic government in Yakutsk invested more funds in the education system, including sending Evenk teachers to Leningrad for a special pedagogical training program established for aboriginal peoples of the Russian North. By 1967, the village library in Tyanya boasted 4010 books and journals.[31] The education system, however, was not designed for the development of aboriginal people as individuals. Rather, it was a central instrument through which the state attempted to socialize aboriginal children in the values prescribed by the state. Traditional values such as shamanism were attacked and Marxism-Leninism was shown as the path to higher enlightenment.

At the same time the Evenk were experiencing dramatic social, political, and economic change in their lives, a third of the way around the world, so, too, were the Metis people of northern Alberta.

As nomadic hunter-gatherers, the Metis of northern Alberta lend themselves well to comparison with the Evenk. As progeny of European and Indian cultures, many Metis people reflected the way of life of both worlds. Just as common, however, was the reality that the way of life of many Metis was largely indistinguishable from that of Indians. This was particularly true of the Metis of northern Alberta. However, at the time of Confederation, the Canadian government chose not to recognize the Metis as aboriginal peoples and, thus, did not assume legal responsibility for their affairs.[32] As a consequence, the Metis across Canada, with the exception of Alberta, did not acquire separate, territorial-administrative bases, whereas Indians did. As Pocklington notes: "By far the most important difference between the Indians and the Metis is that the former acquired, at least legally, a secure land base while the latter did not."[33] But, because the federal government chose not to recognize the Metis people, it left the door open for provincial governments to assume jurisdiction over them. In the 1930s, the Alberta government did just that. Importantly, the assimilationist and segregationist policies pursued by the provincial government toward the Metis people, thereafter, strongly paralleled the experiences of the Evenk.

The Metis people were drawn to the attention of the Alberta provincial government in the early 1930s by the conjuncture of a set of particular circumstances. At that time, Alberta was engaged in provincial state-building, having entered the Canadian federal state in 1905. Alberta had decided to open forest reserves to agricultural settlement and soon the federal government was to transfer jurisdiction over natural resources to the province. Many Metis were 'squatters' on these lands and their way of life was seriously threatened, but their leaders in Alberta were especially effective in mobilizing Metis people to meet this challenge. By 1932, the Metis Association of Alberta was formed to advance Metis interests, particularly claims for separate Metis land bases, for access to free hunting and fishing, and for social entitlements such as education. At the same time, provincial elections led to jockeying for the 'Metis vote' among certain politicians, enabling the Metis to find receptive ears within the provincial state. Finally, the Depression was especially hard on the Metis, whose living conditions were markedly worse than neighbouring Indian populations. As a result of such factors, the Government of Alberta established a Royal Commission, known as the Ewing Commission, in 1934 to investigate the situation of the Metis and to provide policy recommendations. Hearings were held throughout the subsequent year. In early 1936, the commission produced its report, and in 1938 the provincial government acted on it in the form of the Metis Betterment Act.

In regards to the aboriginal status of the Metis it should be further noted that although the Ewing Commission was reluctant to recognize the Metis of northern Alberta as aboriginal people explicitly, because of legal-constitutional implications with the federal government, it was clearly acknowledged implicitly. The Ewing Commission, for instance, defined 'Metis' as "a person of mixed blood, white and Indian, who lives the life of an ordinary Indian, and includes a non-treaty Indian [sic]."[34] Moreover, its report declares: "The Commission is of opinion that as the Metis were the original inhabitants of these great unsettled areas and are dependent on wild life and fish for their livelihood, they should be given the preference over non-residents in respect of fur, game and fish."[35] Thus, in terms of race and way of life, the Metis were recognized as indigenous peoples. What is important in all of this is not why the federal government or the other provinces ignored the Metis people--as indigenous people. Rather, once the Metis were recognized as a problem of integration, the province acted as a *modern state*.

The imperatives underlying the recommendations of the Ewing Commission and subsequent government policy--well-being and assimilation--had uncanny parallels to those guiding Soviet policy in the Russian North. Like Russia confronting the social devastation left by the Revolution and Civil War, the government in Alberta recognized that measures had to be taken to address the desperate social conditions of the Metis resulting from the Depression. The government observed that the expansion of settler populations and development in hitherto frontier regions of the province had undermined the capacity of traditional economic pursuits to provide a means of livelihood, "creating conditions of extreme privation and rendering their occupations precarious even in the remote and wholly unsettled districts."[36] As a consequence, many Metis were living in shacks on the fringes of Indian reserves and along road allowances, conditions conducive to the spread of communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis. "It is common practice, even in the settled areas, for large families (in some cases as many as ten or twelve person [sic]) to live in a one room shack without any ventilation or any regard for the protection of their health . . . ."[37] In addition to health and housing, the government was also concerned about the high level of illiteracy among the Metis population. One Metis leader, Malcom Norris commented on his fellow Metis: "If you know the half-breed element at all, you will know that they are extremely illiterate and therefore inarticulate."[38] However, the government's concern with Metis education and literacy was not entirely altruistic, but was also conscious of the "stigma which attaches to any civilized country that permits a large number of children to grow up within its boundaries without the slightest elementary education."[39] It could also be read that to fail to incorporate the Metis into the social fabric of the dominant society was to fail as a *modern* state.

A large part of the explanation of the poor social conditions of the Metis was linked to a theme that ran throughout the hearings of the Ewing Commission: nomadism. Time and time again, whether it be education, health, or economy, Metis nomadism was singled out as a key obstacle to the improvement of Metis well-being. One witness to the commission reported, for instance, that "[t]he same difficulties arise in connection with education as with medical service. Settlements are few and scattered. The people are largely nomads. They go where they can fish at certain seasons and go where they can hunt and gather fur at other seasons. Obviously, a teacher cannot follow them."[40] At the same, the commission questioned whether nomadism could be overcome. The chair of the commission bluntly asked one Metis leader whether "with proper training they would cease to be a nomadic people."[41] From the perspective of the Alberta provincial state, denomadization was a necessary condition if the Metis were to become equal members of the dominant society. The commission recommended the creation of farm colonies to gradually transform nomadic hunters into sedentary farmers: "We think, however, that over a long period of time the tendency will be to make the half-breed more and more dependent on farming and stock raising. This is the aim and purpose of the plan."[42]

Government assimilationist goals and Metis aspirations for a land base coincided, and on 22 November 1938, the Metis Population Betterment Act was passed into law. The cornerstone of this legislation was its provisions for the creation of settlements (originally called colonies) for the Metis people of northern Alberta. Of the original Metis settlements, two were subsequently terminated by the provincial government (one settlement was unoccupied; the residents of the other were moved to other settlements) and others were amalgamated and split. As a result, eight settlements exist today, one of which is Gift Lake.

In 1939, in accordance with the Metis Population Betterment Act, a Metis Settlement Association, which officially denoted the members of a given settlement, was established at Settlement Area No. 3, Utikuma Lake (later renamed Gift Lake) by the Metis people of the Gift Lake area. In 1940, 32 families numbering 149 people were approved to belonged the settlement association.[43] Of these families, 13 were living on the settlement, the other 19 waiting to move on to it.[44] Less than three decades later, in 1967, the population had grown to 404,[45] as other Metis families moved onto the settlement from the surrounding area.

In contrast to Tyanya, Gift Lake did not experience numerous territorial changes. But Gift Lake, along with the other Metis settlements, did undergo very important administrative changes, each one increasing the power of the province vis-à-vis the settlement and, thus, increasing the surveillance and internal pacification capacities of the province on its frontier. An important amendment to the Metis Population Betterment Act in 1940 eliminated the phrase "that the ways and means of giving effect to such recommendations [of the Ewing Commission] should be arrived at by means of conferences and negotiations between the Government of the Province and representatives of the Metis population of the Province."[46] Other amendments in 1940 gave sweeping powers to the minister and the cabinet over the settlements, severely reducing local political autonomy. In 1952, amendments concerning the governing boards further increased the power of the provincial state. Whereas previously the board for each settlement consisted of up to five elected members of the respective settlement association, the board now consisted of a supervisor appointed by the government, two members from the settlement association appointed by the government and only two members elected by the settlement population. Between 1952 and 1990, governance of Metis settlements changed very little. The changes in 1940 and 1952 were inconsistent with democratic principles of the polity of Alberta. However, they were similar to the pattern of aboriginal-state relations that emerged in Tyanya. As the power of the state grew, so did its domination of aboriginal communities, regardless whether the regime was authoritarian and democratic.

Along with direct changes in the authority of the province over the Metis settlements, indirect changes were effected through the training of Metis board members in local governance by the provincial state. In 1969, for instance, the Community Development Branch of the Government of Alberta ran a training course for settlement councilors in Edmonton, as well as leadership workshops in the Bonnyville and Lesser Slave Lake areas.[47] Such workshops were intended to foster the development of titular administrations at the local level whose practises were consistent with those of the provincial state, thus, furthering its regional integration.

In addition to political organization, the transformation of the economic dimension of Metis life was an explicit goal of the Alberta government. Commenting on the situation of the Metis, the Ewing Commission noted: "As the supply of fur, fish and game gradually becomes less, and it becomes increasingly difficult for the Metis to earn a livelihood from these sources, it becomes evident that the only hope of making a half-breed a self-supporting citizen is through agriculture and particularly stock raising."[48] With the incorporation of the Metis into the dominant economy as its goal, the government encouraged the development of agricultural and forestry activities on Gift Lake Settlement. By 1967-68, however, only 45 hectares of the settlement's 840 square kilometers were cropped, all in hay. Ranching was limited to 46 horses and 55 cattle.[49] In 1969, the provincial government carried out an assessment of the agricultural potential of the Metis Settlements. Not surprisingly, in Gift Lake it was determined that there was no potential for farm units (i.e., for grain production) given the nature of the soils and terrain, but there was potential for 45 ranch units (for cattle production).[50] To this day, agriculture has not developed as a mainstay of economic activity on the settlement. Forestry activities were more substantial. In 1967, timber harvested on the settlement amounted to $17,762 for settlers and a further $10,592 in timber dues for the Metis Trust.[51] Contrary to conventional views of aboriginal communities, only 2.7% of the settlement income came from social assistance in 1970.[52] Despite thirty years' efforts to transform the economy of Gift Lake, however, the settlement was still considered by the Alberta government, in 1970, to be an 'isolated community' which had an economy "heavily dependent on the traditional activities--the harvesting of fish and wildlife in their immediate area."[53]

Social development was pursued by the provincial state in the areas of education, health, and housing. Although the present school on Gift Lake Settlement was built through provincial government funds, the original school in Gift Lake, which opened in 1945, was built through the materials, land and labour volunteered by the members of the community.[54] In contrast to residential schools, such as in the neighbouring community of Grouard, Gift Lake school was public and non-denominational, which was a reflection of the interests of the Metis leadership of the 1930s. However, many of the residents who moved to Gift Lake in the 1950s and 1960s attended one of several residential schools in the Lesser Slave Lake area. (Given recent media attention about the controversial role that denominational schools have played in Indian education, it is ironic that, in 1964, a number of community members petitioned the provincial government to have religion taught at Gift Lake Public School.[55]) By 1967, the Gift Lake School had 97 students from grades 1 to 8; 17 other students attended higher grades in Grouard.[56] The development of health services, as in the case of Tyanya, were slow to come to Gift Lake and traditional medicine was still practised after the Second World War. An early resident of the settlement recounted that in the early 1950s, there "wasn't a doctor or nurse here, so we had to take care of whoever was sick. Roots and herbs were used. Roots were boiled and the liquid was given to the sick person to drink."[57] By 1969, however, nursing stations were maintained at Gift Lake and the neighbouring Cree community, Atikameg, and were staffed by a single nurse two days per week at each station.[58]

Finally, given the living conditions of the 1930s, housing was a salient need of social development plans. Here, too, social development did not keep pace with the general population. Around 1970, outlining the aboriginal housing situation in northern isolated communities, which included Gift Lake, one government report stated: "Much of the housing . . . is grossly substandard by comparison with the remainder of the province. Most families are housed in one-roomed log cabins which are invariably over-crowded. Many of the homes are without even the most basic conveniences such as electric power. . . . Indoor plumbing is almost universally absent as are telephones and satisfactory supplies of water."[59] In 1967, houses on the settlement were still getting hooked up to power,[60] and there were only 60 houses for its 404 residents. In fact, there were few differences in the housing situation between Gift Lake and Tyanya during this period.

For the Evenk of Tyanya and the Metis of Gift Lake, modern state-building meant fundamental and irrevocable change. In each case, the state created aboriginal settlements to serve as crucibles within which Evenk and Metis lives would be transformed. Nomadism was replaced by life in permanent settlements with delimited territorial boundaries, and membership in the community became permanent. Local structures of government replaced traditional, consensus decision-making. Efforts were made to turn hunters into ranchers and farmers. The state also took responsibility for providing the benefits of 'civilization', such as housing and education. In the process, important elements of Evenk and Metis life were lost; others endured. Kinship, for instance, remained central to political life within the communities. Traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing, also remained important in everyday life. The very creation of aboriginal settlements, however, reinforced the segregation of these communities from dominant Russian and Canadian societies and had the unintended consequence of melding strong, aboriginal, collective identities. It is these collective identities which provided the foundation upon which the quests for self-determination in Tyanya and Gift Lake took place.

Toward Self-Government

On 1 November 1990, the provisions of the Alberta Metis Settlements Accord negotiated between the Alberta Metis Federation and the Government of Alberta became law, and, as a result, the Metis of Gift Lake, along with the Metis of the seven other settlements, became self-governing within the Province of Alberta. On 23 December 1992, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) passed "The Law Concerning Nomadic Clan Communities of the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North" and, as a consequence, the Evenk of Tyanya, with other aboriginal communities of Yakutia, also formally entered the era of self-government. These agreements represent firsts for aboriginal peoples in both countries. The Alberta Metis remain the only Metis in Canada to have a secure land base, and are also one of the few aboriginal groups to have achieved self-government. The Sakha Republic (Yakutia) is the first and remains only one of two jurisdictions in Russia where aboriginal peoples can, by law, organize self-governing communities.

The achievement of these self-government agreements, fundamentally, was a consequence of the particular course of aboriginal political development precipitated by modern state-building. It must be understood that this course of development represents a radical break with crucial elements of traditional social and political life. To be sure, basic elements of aboriginal culture have endured and are crucial to defining contemporary aboriginal identity. Others, though, have irrevocably changed. The processes by which the state attempted to eliminate tribal ways of life and, thus, transform frontier regions into bordered territories, created the foundations for politicized aboriginal communities to emerge. However, to move from condition to action depends upon the resources and opportunity. Together, the assimilationist and segregationist policies created the *condition* of politicized aboriginal communities and provided the *resources* to engage in struggles for greater political autonomy. Broader changes in state and society, as well as in the international community, provided the *opportunity* for aboriginal collective action. This analysis turns now to a discussion of condition, resources, and opportunity.

The condition of politicized aboriginal communities assumes the existence of both interests and organization. Interests refer to the grievances of groups engaged in collective action. For the Evenk and the Metis, the primary goal of their political struggles was self-government--securing a collective land base and acquiring decision-making authority over the people and territory of that land base. As early as 1969, in a letter to the premier of Alberta, the Metis Settlement Associations raised the issue of self-government: "we would respectfully submit the Government should give immediate consideration to incorporating the concept of self autonomy in the Metis Betterment Act in order to permit the Metis Settlement Associations to more effectively govern their own affairs."[61] Enhancing the political autonomy of the Metis Settlements was advanced throughout the 1970s; however, it acquired its most detailed articulation in the document produced by the Federation in 1982 which outlined the bases of Metis to aboriginal rights, including the right to self-government. The Evenk, along with the other aboriginal peoples of Yakutia, expressed formally their claims to self-determination for the first time in the 1990 decree which founded the Association of the Small Peoples of the North.[62]

Organization refers to the degree of collective identity and to the extent of intragroup ties. Evenk and Metis identities, as already argued, were fundamentally shaped by the segregationist policies of the state. Once loosely-connected, nomadic social collectivities, the various Evenk and Metis family-units who lived in the vicinity of Tyanya and Gift Lake, respectively, were brought together into more or less permanent communities. From the perspective of collective action, these local level settlements are the fundamental unit of political community and group identity. Unlike modern nations where the strongest political attachment lies with the national, not regional or local, community, for contemporary aboriginal peoples, the strongest political attachment lies with the local level community. The development of Evenk and Metis political organization reflected this reality.

Formal structures of group organization at the local level were already institutionalized by the time the Evenk and Metis embarked on the quest for self-government: the village soviet, in the case of the Evenk, and the settlement, in the case of the Metis. Group organization, however, was not limited to the local level. In common with other aboriginal peoples, state policies created conditions for the development of pan-tribal organization. The most important pan-tribal organization for the residents of Gift Lake was at the provincial level and for those of Tyanya at the republic level. Although there are also district level and national level organizations, these have played a secondary role. In 1989, the Association of the Small Peoples of the North of Yakutia was created through the efforts of members of the aboriginal intelligentsia in the Yakut ASSR. The Association has an ambiguous status as it was only semi-autonomous from the state. It was created and is still funded by the state; yet, the goal of the Association was to represent groups challenging the state. In 1975, the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations was created by the leadership of the eight Metis settlements. In contrast to the Association in Yakutia, the Federation was incorporated as a non-profit society, independent of the state. Both of these organizations played central roles in advancing the collective interests of the Evenk of Tyanya and the Metis of Gift Lake.

In order for groups to pursue their interests, they must possess resources. Compared to the dominant state and society, the Evenk and Metis are relatively resource poor, especially in terms of numbers and money. But, they are not without resources. Many of the resources available to the Evenk and Metis were provided or generated unintentionally by the state. Land, administrative apparatuses, skilled leadership, money, and access to media have all proven important. As noted in the previous chapter, if the struggle for self-government is viewed not simply as bringing pressure to bear on the state, but also as collecting those elements which make for self-government, then the Evenk and Metis are resource rich in critical areas. One has only to compare, for instance, the Alberta Metis with Metis in other provinces of Canada, who do not have territorial-administrative units, to see how resource advantaged the

Alberta Metis are. The occupancy of territory claimed by Evenk and Metis was perhaps their most important resource.

Another important asset has been the possession of institutions of local government. If nothing else, governments can organize other resources for political struggle, including people. The occupancy of territory and the possession of institutions of local government, however, lowered the threshold to acquire self-government much lower in both cases. Land did not have to be set aside and institutions did not have to be built from scratch. Rather, self-government was mainly a question of the transfer of authority from the state to the aboriginal communities.

The resolution of this question did require bringing other resources to bear on the state. Leadership and media, and to a lesser extent money, played a much greater role, and the Evenk and Metis were especially well served by skilled political leaders. In the case of the Evenk, aboriginal leaders at the regional level in Yakutsk, many of whom were apparatchiks under the Soviet system, were able to steer aboriginal interests carefully through the legislative processes. This feat is remarkable given that aboriginal peoples make up less than five percent of the population of Yakutia. At the local level, effective leadership was just as critical, not only in mobilizing local support for self-governing communities, but also in dealing with district level administrations which had a considerable impact on the process. Without the leadership of Mikhail Bagaev, who was tireless in his efforts, Tyanya may not have been one of the communities in Yakutia to achieve self-government. In Alberta, the fate of Gift Lake depended more on the leadership of the Federation collectively than it did at the local level. In both cases, the media was a very important tool in bringing pressure to bear on the state. The newspaper press in Yakutia devoted considerable attention to the situation of aboriginal peoples, particularly their living conditions and the vulnerability of their cultures. In Alberta, the media were also useful, even when not used. In 1989, when negotiations in self-government were stalling, the Metis threatened to run a caravan into the provincial capital just before the election, which would have embarrassed the government. An agreement was reached before the election.[63] Finally, money cannot be ignored as a valuable resource. Conducting meetings, printing policy positions, distributing promotional paraphernalia among the rank and file, all required funding. Yakutia and Alberta are comparatively resource rich and, as a consequence, the money available to the aboriginal organizations from the respective states was comparatively high.

While politicized aboriginal communities and the possession of resources were necessary conditions for successful struggles for self-government, they were not sufficient. One must also have an opportunity to act. Neither the Metis nor the Evenk struggles for self-government could take place until critical changes within state and society had occurred. The emergence of a dissent-permitting society and national attempts at constitutional change were crucial in this regard. Without such conditions, the mobilization of collective resources and the articulation of group interests is difficult, if not impossible.

Conclusion

The process of collective action to acquire self-government by the Metis of Alberta, starting in the later 1960s, was much longer than in the case of the Evenk who were caught up in the tumultous changes accompanying the collapse of the Soviet order. But, in both cases, collective action bore fruit: in 1990, Gift Lake and, in 1992, Tyanya became self-governing communities. In both cases, self-government agreements are frameworks which enable modern states and aboriginal peoples to coexist. Self-government represents two sides of the aboriginal-state relations coin. On the aboriginal side, self-government represents the recognition by the state of some degree of political autonomy for aboriginal peoples to make decisions effecting the well-being of their political communities. On the state side, self-government represents success in the regional integration of its rule.

However, the achievement of self-government in Tyanya and Gift Lake are still exceptions in both Russia and Canada. Some communities are poised to achieve self-government in the near future; for most, the struggle will continue for some time. In important ways these communities remain on the frontier of the state. Until the state accommodates the aspirations of all aboriginal communities, the integration of the state, from its central domains to its most peripheral regions, will remain incomplete.

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[1] Some excellent works on aboriginal politics in Russia that proceed at a macrohistorical level of analysis include James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gail Fondahl, "Siberia: Native peoples and newcomers in collision," in *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*; ed. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[2] Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), 61. Tilly further argues that if "the work is historical, it need not be grand. When it comes to understanding proletarianization, for example, much of the most valuable work proceeds at the scale of a single village. Keith Wrightson and David Levine's study of Terling, Essex, from 1525 to 1700 tells us more about the creation of a propertyless underclass than do reams of general essays about capitalism." (Tilly, p. 14).

[3] Interview with Evenk elder, November 1991.

[4] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Proizvodstvenno Finansovyi Plan Tokkinskogo Oxotsovkhoza Yakutgostorga na 1931 god," F. 55, Op. 4, D. 1.

[5] As a legal-racial category, the Metis people are one of the three aboriginal peoples recognized by the Canadian constitution (the other two are the Indian and Inuit peoples). In its broadest meaning, Metis refers to any one of mixed Indian-European ancestory who is not a legally-defined, status Indian. Sometimes, Metis more narrowly refers to the people of mixed Indian (usually Cree) and Scottish or French ancestory who are the descendants of the Red River community of Manitoba during the last half of the nineteenth century. Metis people lived in northern Alberta, long before the arrival of settler populations, the founding of the Canadian state or the Riel Rebellions.

[6] David May, ed.,*Mud Roads and Strong Backs: The History of the Metis Settlement of Gift Lake* (Edmonton: Friesen Printers, 1984), 1.

[7] M. P. Sokolov, *Yakutia po Perepisi 1917 goda* (Irkutsk: Izdanie Yakutskogo Statisticheskogo Upravleniya, 1925), 26.

[8] Interview with an Evenk elder, November 1991.

[9] By the turn of the century, it is estimated that as many as half of the Evenk in Yakutia spoke Yakut as their native language. (At the same time, Evenk words made their way into Yakut: it is estimated that about four percent the words of the Yakut language are Evenk in origin.)

[10] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Dokladhaya Zapiska o Kochevykh Evenkov Aldano-Mayskogo Rayona," F. 50, Op. 1, D. 3794.

[11] Province of Alberta Archives, "To the Honorable George Hoadley, Minister of Agriculture," Accession No. 70.414/1417.

[12] Then, northern Alberta was the District of Athabaska.

[13] The Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was founded in April 1992 as a constituent unit of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

[14] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Proekt Ekonomicheskogo i Administrativnogo Paoonirovaniya Olekminskogo Okruga," F. 70, Op. 1, D. 1055. During the 1920s, okrugs existed as middle level territorial-administrative units between the republic and the rayons.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Nikolai Nikolaevich Tikhonov, *Meri po Bozrozheniyu Kochevoy Rodovoy Obshchiny Tokkinskikh Evenkov Etnicheskoy Gruppy "Cheroda"* (Yakutsk: n.p., 1992), 12; See *Statisticheskiy Spravochnik Yakutskoy ASSR* (Yakutsk: Izdanie Gosplana i UNKhU YaASSR, 1941), 56.

[17] Olekminsk State Archives, "Opisanie Tokkinskogo Rayona Yakutskoy ASSR [1951]," F. 23, D. 15, Op. 1.

[18] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Doklandnaya Pereselencheskiy Otdel pri SNK YaASSR tov. Borisovu S.Z." F. 52, Op. 18, D. 292.

[19] Olekminsk State Archives, "Tokkinskiy Rayon Fiziko-Geograficheskiy Obzor," F. 23, D. 14, Op. 1.

[20] Olekminsk State Archives, "Otchetnaya Vedomost'," F. 56, D. 18, Op. 1.

[21] Olekminsk State Archives, F. 3, D. 331, Op. 1.

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[22] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Proekt Ekonomicheskogo i Administrativnogo Paoonirovaniya Olekminskogo Okruga," F. 70, Op. 1, D. 1055.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Proizvodstvenno Finansovyi Plan Tokkinskogo Oxotsovkhoza Yakutgostorga na 1931 god." F. 55, Op. 4, D. 1.

[25] Central Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Postanovlenie YaTsIK i SNK YaASSR," F. 55, Op. 4, D. 1.

[26] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "Proekt Ekonomicheskogo i Administrativnogo Raoonirovaniya Olekminskogo Okruga," F. 70, Op. 1, D. 1055.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Olekminsk State Archives, "Tokkinskiy Rayon Fiziko-Geograficheskiy Obzor," F. 23, D. 14, Op. 1.

[29] Olekminsk State Archives, "Opisanie Tokkinskogo Rayona Yakutskoy ASSR, 1951," F. 23, D. 15, Op. 1.

[30] Central State Archives of the Yakut ASSR, "O merakh po dal'neyshemu razvitiyu ekonomiki i kul'tury narodnostey Severa," F. 68, Op. 13, D. 388.

[31] Olekminsk State Archives, F. 3, Op. 1, D. 331.

[32] Only in the 1982 Canadian Constitution were the Metis finally recognized as aboriginal peoples, along with the Indian and Inuit peoples.

[33] T. C. Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991), 6.

[34] "Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Conditions of the Half-Breed Population of Alberta, 1936," p. 4.

[35] Ibid., 13.

[36] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Report of Activities in Connection with the Settlement of the Metis, Period January 1st, 1939 to January 31st, 1940," Accession No. 70.414/File 1937.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Evidence and Proceeding, Half-Breed Commission," Accession No. 75.75/Box 2, #9.

[39] "Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Conditions of the Half-Breed Population of Alberta, 1936," p. 14.

[40] Ibid., 7.

[41] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Evidence and Proceedings Half-Breed Commission," Accession No. 75.75/Box 2, #9.

[42] Report of the Royal Commission . . . the Half-Breed Population of Alberta," p. 10.

[43] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Report of the Activities in Connection with the Settlement of the Metis, Period January 1st, 1939 to January 1st, 1940," Accession No. 70.414/File 1937.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Progress Report--All Colonies, November 30, 1966--November 30, 1967," Accession No. 79.333/2.

[46] Government of Alberta, "An Act Respecting the Metis Population of the Province," 1938.

[47] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "To Colony Managers of Kikino Colony, Gift Lake Colony, Elizabeth Colony, Caslan Colony, East Prairie Colony," Accession No. 76.502/44.

[48] Report of the Royal Commission . . . the Half-Breed Population of Alberta," p. 9.

[49] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Introduction: [Isolated Communities Report]" Accession No. 79.333/1/24, p. 95.

[50] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Meeting of the Metis Task Force, December 4, 1969," Accession No. 76.502, Box. 20.

[51] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Gift Lake Colony Area #3E," Accession No. 76.502/Box 48.

[52] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "From T. F. Roach, Chairman, Metis Task Force, Re: Land Tenure, Metis People," Accession No. 76.502/27.

[53] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Introduction: [Isolated Communities Report]" Accession No. 79.333/1/24

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[54] May, *Mud Roads and Strong Backs*, 32.

[55] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "We the undersigned electors of Gift Lake Public School . . ." Accession No. 84.37/4240.

[56] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Gift Lake Colony Area #3E," Accession No. 76.502/Box 48.

[57] May, *Mud Roads and Strong Backs*, 40.

[58] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Introduction: [Isolated Communities Report]" Accession No. 79.333/1/24, p. 88.

[59] Ibid., 2.

[60] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "Gift Lake Colony Area #3E," Accession No. 76.502/Box 48.

[61] Provincial Archives of Alberta, "To the Honourable Harry Strom, Premier of Alberta, and the Honourable Members of the Executive Council," Accession No. 76.502, Box. 20.

[62] "Ustav Assotsiatsii Narodnostey Severa Yakutii," (Yakutsk: 1990).

[63] Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements*, 149-150.

CHAPTER SIX
At the Dawn of Self-Government

Aboriginal issues in Canada have increasingly gained saliency at the national level. While attracting nowhere nearly the same attention as in Canada, aboriginal peoples of the Russian North, too, have had successes in forcing their issues onto the national political agenda. Most attention, however, has focused on the pronouncements of aboriginal and government elites; very little attention has focused on the views of ordinary aboriginal community members. That aboriginal elites will play an important role in the achievement of self-government agreements is clear. But, whether Native self-government succeeds or fails will depend ultimately upon aboriginal community members at large. Ostensibly, self-government is intended to protect the distinctiveness of aboriginal cultures and to better community life (not merely to better the social power of the elites that govern them). It is important, therefore, that there is evidence of strong support for maintaining the distinctive elements of aboriginal ways of life, of broad commitment to the well-being of the community, as well as general agreement on the problems facing it, of participation in the political life of the community, and of general consensus on the relevance of self-government.

Given their importance, surprisingly little attention has been accorded to the views and orientations of ordinary, aboriginal community members. In a modest way, the following research helps to fill in this critical gap. During the fall and winter of 1992, the author conducted interviews with community members in Gift Lake, a Metis community in northern Alberta, Canada, and Tyanya, an Evenk community in southwestern Yakutia, Russia. In each community, fifty (50) individual members were interviewed for a total of one hundred (100) interviews. Those interviewed were selected by systematic sampling. In Tyanya, the voting list in the national presidential election was used to select respondents. First, the males and females were separated into two lists to ensure that gender was accurately represented. Then, an Evenk child was asked to select a number at random. Starting with that number, every fifth community member was chosen. If the person was away from the community or chose not to participate in the interview, then the next member on the list was selected. In Gift Lake, a similar method of selection was used; but, the settlement membership list was used instead of a voting list. Because Gift Lake has a larger population, every seventh person was chosen. The questions asked of those interviewed were wide-ranging and often led into discussions about family and community life. Some interviews lasted only fifteen or twenty minutes; others lasted longer than three or four cups of coffee. These discussions provided insights into the political life of aboriginal communities.

On the basis of comparisons with information obtained from other sources, the views expressed by respondents appear to be representative of the views of community members at large. I found the views consistent with informal interviews and discussions during numerous research trips, both to these two settlements and to others in northern Alberta and in Siberia. The responses also reflected the opinions expressed by students in political science courses that I taught in three different northern, aboriginal communities in Alberta. One class of these students undertook a research project which involved interviewing members of the students' home communities, using the same and similar questions (along with others). The findings of the project closely parallelled the findings presented below.

The impetus for this investigation emanates from T.C. Pocklington's pioneering study *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements* which includes an inquiry, based on interviews with 'ordinary' community members, of the political life of two Metis communities in northern Alberta.[1] In fact, a number of the questions asked in Tyanya and Gift Lake are drawn from that study. Along with Pocklington's work, the discussion of the findings presented here focuses, to a significant degree, around the arguments advanced in Menno Boldt's *Surviving as Indians*.[2] This thoughtful book critically assesses the implications of self-government for the survival of Indian peoples not merely as a legal-racial category, but as distinctive cultures. The investigation of Tyanya and Gift Lake is driven by similar concerns. Specifically, this study seeks the answers to the following questions: How important are traditional values and practices in contemporary aboriginal communities? What are the most important problems confronting aboriginal communities? How have political structures imposed by the state on aboriginal communities affected political life? Is self-government something that is desired by community members? If so, for what reasons? Accordingly, the analysis of Tyanya and Gift Lake is organized around four main themes: culture, community well-being, community politics, and self-government.

Culture

The cultural survival of indigenous peoples is central to any discussion of aboriginal self-determination. For most of this century, the cultures of indigenous peoples across Russia and Canada have been subject to relentless assimilationist pressures, both intentional and unintentional. The degree to which traditional elements of indigenous cultures have survived and the extent to which these elements are still valued by aboriginal peoples have considerable bearing on the future prospects for *aboriginal* self-government. Boldt poignantly argues: "Unless Indians can revitalize their traditional philosophies and principles they will become extinct as *Indians*; they will survive only as Indians, that is, as a legal-racial category defined in the Indian act."[6] The elements that define any culture, arguably, are inexhaustible. However, among those elements which might be considered fundamental are language, spiritual beliefs, traditional economic pursuits, and the role of elders. Questions regarding each of these elements were put forward to community members of Tyanya and Gift Lake.

Language

Language often defines group identity and fosters group solidarity. Language also embodies the world view of a people. Not surprisingly, state assimilationist policies invariably targeted aboriginal languages. Since the Second World, these policies, along with the explosion of television and radio media, have led to a dramatic erosion of the number of aboriginal people across Russia and Canada who still speak their respective native languages. Many of these languages are in a state of crisis and some are certain to become extinct. "When a language dies," notes Boldt, "a world view is lost." As a consequence, Boldt argues "Indians cannot survive fully as *Indians* without retaining their languages."[7] It is important to stress, however, that the impact of these developments has not been experienced uniformly. In some communities, there are few or even no native speakers; in others, every person is a fluent speaker. In Gift Lake, the question of language retention is relatively straightforward to assess: a person is either a Cree or/and an English speaker. In Tyanya, the situation is more complex. Before the Revolution, many Evenk (following the northern migration of the Yakut people several centuries before Russian conquest) spoke Yakut as their native language or Yakut in addition to Evenk; thus, Yakut is considered a native language by many Evenk even though it was not so historically.[8] The complexity of this issue is highlighted in the following anecdote. One day during lunch, I asked an Evenk elder who was born prior to the revolution and lived a traditional Evenk way of life prior to Soviet government contact and who spoke Evenk fluently, why she spoke Yakut. She responded to me with astonishment on her face: "because it is our native language."[9] In order to obtain as full a picture as possible of the situation of language in Tyanya and Gift Lake, respondents were asked questions regarding not only the language(s) they considered their native language(s), but also how well they spoke their native language and what language(s) they spoke at home.

In Tyanya respondents were asked to identify their mother tongue. Forty-six (46) percent of community member chose Evenk as their mother tongue, thirty-two (32) percent chose Yakut, and fourteen (14) percent chose both Evenk and Yakut. Two (2) percent each chose either Russian; Yakut and Russian; or Evenk, Yakut, and Russian. Finally, one respondent had no answer to the question. Thus, some sixty-two (62) percent of those interviewed indicated that Evenk was at least one of their native languages and fifty (50) percent indicated Yakut. In Gift Lake, eighty (80) percent of those interviewed identified Cree as their mother tongue, eight (8) percent identified both Cree and English, and twelve (12) percent identified English. Thus, Cree was identified by nearly ninety percent of respondents as one of their native languages. Both patterns of native language self-identification are not unexpected. The relatively lower level of identification of Evenk (compared to Cree in Gift Lake) fits with the history of the Evenk in Yakutia.

Table 6.1 *How Well Do You Speak Cree (or) Evenk and Yakut?*

	None		Some		Fluent	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Gift Lake (Cree)	0	0	10	20	40	80
Tyanya (Evenk)	8	16	22	44	20	40
Tyanya (Yakut)	0	0	3	6	47	94

However, two other indicators--language competency and language(s) used at home--are much more revealing in assessing language retention. Table 6.1 displays responses to the question, "How well do you speak Cree (or) Evenk and Yakut?" The responses for Gift Lake mirror the responses to the question regarding identification of mother tongue: eighty (80) percent of respondents stated they spoke Cree either well or fluently. This would seem to indicate that the Cree language is doing well in Gift Lake. In Tyanya, however, the number of respondents who stated they spoke Evenk well or were fluent dropped to forty (40) percent from more than sixty percent who indicated Evenk as a native language. Moreover, more than twice that number ninety-four (94) percent stated they spoke Yakut well or were fluent. This would seem to indicate that the Evenk language is in danger of being replaced by Yakut.

If we turn to the question of what language is spoken at home (Table 6.2), this pattern is even more acute. In Gift Lake, twenty-eight (28) percent responded that they spoke predominantly or exclusively Cree at home, sixty-eight (68) percent stated both Cree and English, and only four (4) percent responded English. In contrast to Gift Lake, *no one* in Tyanya responded that they spoke primarily Evenk at home. Instead, seventy-four (74) percent replied that they mainly or exclusively spoke Yakut. Only sixteen (16) percent responded that they spoke Evenk along with Yakut, or along with Yakut and Russian. Thus, whereas Cree was regularly spoken in ninety-six (96) percent of homes in Gift Lake, Evenk was spoken regularly, at best, in sixteen (16) percent of homes in Tyanya. These responses reflected the impressions I had as a short-term visitor to each community. In Gift Lake, adults and, notably, children were frequently speaking freely in Cree, whether at home, in the settlement office, or at the store. But in Tyanya, I heard Evenk spoken only a few times, usually among peoples over sixty years of age. There are efforts to teach the Evenk language in the local school to children at the primary grades, but unless it becomes the language of daily life, it may not survive. At the same time, however, that over two-thirds of residents in Gift Lake spoke both English and Cree at home may be taken as a warning signal.

Table 6.2 *What Language Do You Speak At Home*

	Tyanya			Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
Evenk	0	0	Cree	14	28
Yakut	37	74	English	2	4
Evenk & Yakut	7	14	Both	34	68
Yakut & Russian	5	10			
All	1	2			

Economy

In southern parts of Canada and western and southern parts of Siberia, where industrial-resource and agricultural development have been the most intense, the opportunity to pursue traditional economic activities is severely limited, if not impossible. For many aboriginal peoples, this dimension of traditional life has been irrevocably lost. Boldt argues, therefore, that

> [t]hose who insist that *Indian* cultural survival is inextricably linked to the traditional means of subsistence--that is, hunting, fishing, and gathering--are not doing their peoples or cultures a service. . . . If Indians are to survive as *Indians* their cultures must be more than a mere correlate of their traditional and outmoded means of subsistence. They must be flexible, evolving designs for living and surviving in an industrialized world.[10]

For aboriginal peoples in the southern regions of Canada and Russia, this may be applicable. Boldt, however, underestimates the vitality and viability of traditional subsistence activities for many other aboriginal peoples, particularly, for those in more peripheral regions of Russia and Canada where traditional economic pursuits continue to play a significant role in daily life. Given their remoteness, Tyanya and Gift Lake are both places where it is still possible to practise traditional subsistence activities.

The relative importance of traditional economic activities, however, is not an easy dimension to measure. A number of anthropologists and geographers have calculated the number of plants and animals harvested in aboriginal communities, as well as their caloric and economic contributions to individual households.[11] In contrast to these studies, the importance of traditional economic activities was investigated here in a far less sophisticated way, though the findings are quite revealing. Respondents were asked whether they practised traditional activities and, if so, which ones. They were also asked to assess the importance of these activities to their families. In both communities, many people still partake in hunting, fishing and berry picking; however, the findings indicate that these activities play a much more central role in daily life in Tyanya than they do in Gift Lake.

Table 6.3 *Which Traditional Economic Activities Do You Practise?*

	Tyanya						Gift Lake					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hunting	24	48	4	8	28	56	21	42	5	10	27	54
Fishing	23	46	4	8	27	54	22	44	6	12	28	56
Berry Pick	22	44	24	48	46	92	9	18	12	24	21	42
None	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	11	22	14	28

Table 6.3 (Because respondents could choose more than one activity, the percentages should not be read to total 100%.) reveals several important patterns in regards to the number of individuals who practise traditional subsistence activities (hunting, fishing, and berry picking), especially by gender. First, traditional economic activities are practised by no less than a qualified majority of respondents in both communities. In fact, in Tyanya everyone responded that they practised at least one activity. Second, there is a sharp division of labour between men and women. In both Tyanya and Gift Lake, hunting and fishing are overwhelmingly practised by men. This was not the case traditionally. Evenk women, in particular, often hunted with their husbands, and a number of women who were born before the revolution still have reputations as skilled hunters. Villagization, however, has changed this pattern. Third, in both communities berry picking is practised more equally between men and women, though, in each case

women are the majority. Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, there is a sharp difference in the participation of women in traditional activities between Tyanya and Gift Lake. Whereas in Tyanya all female respondents either hunted, fished, or picked berries, in Gift Lake, barely half did so. One reason that may account for this difference is the availability of fresh food, especially fruits. Whereas in Gift Lake it is easy to obtain a variety of fresh fruits in the nearest town, High Prairie, in Tyanya it is quite difficult. In the district centre Olekminsk, fresh fruit is seasonal, limited, and expensive. Thus, there is a much greater reliance on berry picking (the main traditional subsistence activity practised by women) in Tyanya. Whatever reasons account for this difference, it is clear that the future of traditional activities is more precarious in Gift Lake.

Table 6.4 *How Important Are Traditional Economic Activities For Your Family?*

	Not At All		Not Very		Important		Very Important		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gift Lake	1	2	8	16	11	22	22	44	8	16
Tyanya	0	0	0	0	4	8	43	86	3	6

There are also important differences in the importance attached to traditional subsistence activities between the two communities. These differences can be seen in Table 6.4. Whereas ninety-six (96) percent of respondents in Tyanya felt that hunting and gathering activities were important or very important, and no one responded that they were not important or not at all important, in Gift Lake, only two-thirds felt that these activities were important or very important, and nearly one-fifth felt these activities were not important or not at all important. There are at least two principal reasons which explain these differences. First, as comparatively isolated as Gift Lake is, it has experienced the effects of natural resource and agricultural development on traditional economic pursuits to a much greater degree than has Tyanya. The second reason is social assistance. Gift Lake is in a country that is very wealthy and has well-developed social welfare net. Community members, therefore, have the option of social assistance to meet basic family needs, including food. This option does not realistically exist in Tyanya. One of the most striking observable differences between Tyanya and Gift Lake is the 'dependency' of residents in Tyanya on nature. Because no meaningful social assistance programs exist in Russia for people living below the poverty line, residents are heavily dependent on bush food to maintain a healthy diet. As a result, residents in Tyanya pursue traditional activities not merely out of interest, but out of necessity. The comparatively poorer material conditions in Russia have actually helped sustain traditional subsistence economies.

Elders

In indigenous communities, elders traditionally played an indispensable role in community life. The advice of elders was often sought by community members before making important decisions that affected their own well-being or that of the community. Elders were also the principal source of traditional knowledge which was passed on from one generation to the next. By contrast, in contemporary industrial societies, senior members of society are often seen as more of a burden than as a resource for society. Given the pressures of assimilation, it might be expected that the status of elders in contemporary aboriginal communities may be changing.

Table 6.5 *How Much Attention Is Paid To the Advice of Elders in the Running Of the Affairs of The Community*

	Too Much		Enough		Too Little		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gift Lake	0	0	16	32	33	66	1	2
Tyanya	4	8	14	28	30	60	2	4

To investigate this problem, two questions were asked of community members. The results are presented in Table 6.5. The first asked: "How much attention is paid to the advice of elders in the running of the affairs of the community?" In both communities, the sentiment of the clear majority of respondents was that the advice of elders in community affairs ought to be valued. In each case, no less than sixty (60) percent of community member felt that inadequate attention was paid to the advice of elders.[12] Many, though not all, among those who felt that enough attention was paid believed that elders already commanded respect within the community. The second question asked: "Would you like to see a council of elders established that would give advice to the Settlement Council?" Eighty (80) percent in Gift Lake and seventy (70) percent in Tyanya felt that it would be desirable to have a council of elders which could give the benefit of their life experience to the members of the local government in each community. Some of those who opposed this notion of a council of elders usually asserted that "elders were set in their ways" or that "today's problems were too different from the old ways." Others who opposed the notion valued the advice of elders, but thought that informal mechanisms were better than formal ones. It is interesting to note, however, that in

Tyanya eight (8) percent of individuals thought that the role of elders was too great, whereas no one stated this opinion among the respondents in Gift Lake. Moreover, almost one-quarter of respondents in Tyanya did not think that a council of elders ought to be established. While the difference between Tyanya and Gift Lake is not overwhelming it does exist. Part of the explanation may lie in the erosion of what Boldt calls the "oral bridge", in other words, the transmission of traditional values and philosophies from elders to younger generations through oral culture. Boldt identifies three factors which explain this erosion: 1) the imposition of dominant forms of political institutions, 2) the loss of elders raised in the oral tradition, and 3) the decline in aboriginal language usage among youths. In Tyanya, as discussed above, the Evenk language is in a state of crisis; thus, as the crucial vehicle by which traditional values are transmitted wanes, so, too, might the status of elders.

Spiritual Beliefs

For Boldt the key to the survival of indigenous peoples is the revitalization of their traditional philosophies and principles in ways that can be adapted to contemporary world. He cautions that the current revival of expressive-ritualistic elements, such as sweat-lodge ceremonies and dances, is not evidence of a revival of traditional philosophies and principles. Boldt argues that traditional values and norms "that defined their ancestors' way of life, such as communalism, sharing, mutual aid, equality, and decision by consensus, no longer define contemporary day-to-day practical cultures in Indian communities.[13] It is these latter values and norms which are crucial to indigenous survival, not merely their expressive-ritualistic manifestations. For indigenous peoples the traditional source of these philosophies and principles is "the unwritten covenants the Creator communicated to their ancestors."[14] Therefore, the analysis of contemporary spiritual beliefs is important to understanding the cultural state of aboriginal peoples.

Table 6.6 *Religion*

	Gift Lake		Tyanya	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Christianity	47	94	8	16
None	3	6	40	80
Other	0	0	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100

Respondents in Tyanya and Gift Lake were asked to indicate their religion, if any, and to indicate whether or not they believed in native spirituality, in the case of Gift Lake, or shamanism, in the case of Tyanya. The responses to the first question are found in Table 6.6. The most obvious difference between Gift Lake and Tyanya is the percentage of adherents to Christianity. In Gift Lake, over ninety percent of community members espouse a Christian denomination; in Tyanya, over eighty percent do not espouse any religion at all. This pattern is not surprising given the histories of the two peoples. In Tyanya, as throughout the Russian North, shamanism was ruthlessly repressed under Stalin, and through the education system, "scientific atheism" replaced traditional spiritual practices. The Metis, in contrast to Indians, were traditionally, though not exclusively, Christian and often Catholic. Thus, the Canadian state's efforts to Christianize aboriginal peoples did not conflict with traditional Metis spiritual beliefs. In Gift Lake, Catholicism was indicated by sixty (60) percent of those who stated a Christian faith, which is consistent with traditional Metis spiritual beliefs. The two other denominations present in Gift Lake are fundamentalist Christians at twenty-three (23) percent and Anglicans at seventeen (17) percent. The fundamentalist Christian movement is a more recent phenomenon, and a number of people in the community suggest that has led to a decrease over the past few years in drinking within community. Many of the residents, especially those over fifty years of age, attended either the Anglican or the Catholic residential schools in the area before moving to the settlement, which accounts, in particular, for the presence of Anglicanism. Contrary to conventional views, not only status Indians, but also many Metis and non-status Indians attended Church-run residential schools. Although the different denominations are a potential cleavage in Gift Lake (it tends to correlate, as one might expect, with family membership), they do not appear to be divisive in terms of undermining a consensus on community values and norms. In fact, I attended a Christmas concert at the public school, and families of Catholic, Anglican, and fundamentalist Protestant denominations participated together in the community event. Such participation is less than commonplace in the dominant society, where different denominations tend to stay by themselves; moreover, public schools typically no longer have Christmas concerts, especially in the larger urban centres.

Along with religion, respondents were also asked whether or not they believed in Native spirituality in Gift Lake or Shamanism in Tyanya. In Gift Lake fifty (50) percent and in Tyanya forty-two (42) percent of respondents stated that they did. That half of respondents in Gift Lake indicated that they believed in Native spirituality can be explained in part by the origins of the community. Many of the community members have relatives in the adjacent Indian reserve and/or are direct descendants of Indian parents who lost their status. Recently, some of these individuals have even reclaimed their status and are now in a sense 'dual citizens' of Indian bands and the Metis settlement (this situation exists in a number of other Metis settlements in Alberta). Further evidence of the Cree origins of many community members also can be found in the legends and traditional stories, which are Cree in origin, that are a part of the oral history of a number of Gift Lake families. Thus, although Christianity is an important spiritual basis for many community members, so, too, are the traditional aboriginal spiritual values associated with their Cree ancestory. Moreover, the high level of language retention may, in part, explain why these traditional values have persisted.

In the case of Tyanya, however, the relatively high response of those who stated they believed in shamanism is a surprise, especially given that there are no practising Evenk shamans in the Tyanya area. Currently, interest in shamanism is enjoying a revival in Yakutia, but there are at best a handful of individuals who possess the traditional knowledge of shamanistic rituals and beliefs. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to be optimistic about the survival of shamanism as it was practised in the pre-Soviet period.

Nevertheless, the loss of shamanism, especially its expressive-ritualistic dimensions, does not necessarily mean the loss of traditional norms and values, though the cultural-spiritual context within which these values and norms, of course, will be different. In Tyanya, and Gift Lake, there are many elders who have lived in earlier times when communalism, sharing, mutual aid and decision making by consensus were part of the fabric of everyday life. During interviews with respondents, many lamented the erosion of these values, including those of the younger generations. It was also clear that these values have not disappeared as practices of everyday life, especially when the reference point is the dominant society. How important the linkage is between the maintenance of traditional spiritual beliefs on the one hand and traditional values and norms one the other is highly contentious. But, from discussions with residents from both communities, it is evident that it is important that these values and norms survive.

Finally, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the importance attached to cultural markers such as language and traditional subsistence activities to Evenk and Metis ways of life. These questions were then followed by a general question "How important is it to preserve the way of life of the Evenk/Metis?" In Tyanya, ninety-eight (98) percent and, in Gift Lake, ninety-two (92) percent responded that it was either important or very important. In neither community did anyone respond that it was not at all important. The degree to which assimilationist policies have eroded traditional ways of life is not simple to assess. However, what is clear is that community members believe the distinctiveness of their respective cultures ought to survive.

Community Well-Being

Newspapers and television have drawn attention to the social pathologies that many aboriginal communities suffer, such as alcohol abuse, family violence, and high suicides rates. These social pathologies are usually explained by the chronic high unemployment and dependence on social assistance that is present in many of these communities. According to Boldt, this social reality is a reflection of a 'culture dependence' among aboriginal communities: a result of the assimilationist and segregationist policies of the state and of the loss of traditional subsistence activities. In response to this situation, many (though not Boldt) view self-government as the panacea to overcoming this "culture of dependence." But, is this a complete view of the well-being of contemporary aboriginal communities? In his seminal work, *Home and Native Land*, Asch argues that the depiction of aboriginal communities as fundamentally cultures of dependence is woefully incomplete.[15] He does not deny that destructive social pathologies exist in many aboriginal communities, but rather asserts, through an examination of the economic dimension of contemporary Dene society, that important aspects of daily aboriginal life are not only vibrant, but also enhance the well-being of aboriginal communities. A series of questions regarding community well-being were asked in Tyanya and Gift Lake, including whether the inhabitants liked living their communities, what they saw as the major problems confronting the community, and how they thought their respective communities were treated in comparison to neighbouring non-aboriginal communities.

Likes and Dislikes About Community

The first question put to respondents was "Do you like living here?" In Tyanya, ninety-six (96) percent of respondents answered affirmatively; in Gift Lake, a nearly equal share of respondents, ninety-two (92) percent, indicated that they, too, enjoyed living in their community. Such responses are consistent with the findings of Pocklington, for example, in his study of two other Alberta Metis Settlements (Pocklington, 1991).[16] These responses, however, run counter to general perceptions of Native communities as rural ghettoes where people are desperately seeking to get out. This is not to suggest there are not any problems, socio-economic or others, that residents believe need to be addressed. But it does indicate that Native communities are genuinely home to many people.

Table 6.7 *What Do You Like About Living Here*

Tyanya	Number	Percentage	Gift Lake	Number	Percentage
Nature	35	70	Quiet	14	28
Hunt/Fish	6	12	Family	13	26
Air/Climate	3	6	Home	9	18
Everything	3	6	Cheaper	5	10
Family	2	4	Hunting	3	6
No Response	1	2	Other	4	8
			No Response	2	4

Respondents were then asked the open-ended question of what they liked about living in their respective settlements. Many of the respondents gave more than one answer, and often the second or third answer offered was the first choice of another respondent. I grouped the responses by the first choice offered (Table 6.7). In Gift Lake, twenty-eight (28) percent stated that they enjoyed the quietness and tranquillity of settlement life, as compared with the high paced lifestyle of larger urban centres. Almost as popular, at twenty-six (26) percent was the answer, 'family'. The fact that people could visit friends and family and were able to depend on family members, especially, in times of need was viewed as one of the most positive aspects of community life. Other responses included the opportunity to hunt and fish year round on the settlement; the cheaper cost of living (for example, a ten dollar annual tax pays for all community services such a water, sewage, garbage, and snow removal); and simply that it was home.

In Tyanya, seventy (70) percent answered that they enjoyed living in the settlement because of the surrounding natural environment. Such a high response is not surprising as Tyanya is situated on the bank of a small fairy tale river which runs into the majestic Tokko, and a small mountain overlooks the village. Others noted the 'opportunity to hunt and fish' and 'family relations', responses also offered in Gift Lake. One interesting response was the air and climate of Tyanya: the climate of the Olekminsk District in winter is much milder than the area surrounding the city of Yakutsk and the air is noticeably cleaner.

Respondents were then asked what they did not like about living in their respective communities. The responses are in Table 6.8. The single largest response in both communities was 'nothing'--seventy-two (72) percent in Tyanya and forty-eight (48) percent in Gift Lake. The second largest response for both communities was 'relations among people'--eight (8) percent in Tyanya and fourteen (14) percent in Gift Lake. That this was the second most popular response is not surprising. In small, face-to-face communities, everyone knows about everyone else's coming and goings. In fact, when I constructed both interview lists, I only required a couple of people to assist in determining who was present in each village at the time of the interviews, who was gone, and where respondents could be found during any given time of day. Such intimate knowledge, clearly, can be both a blessing and a bane. The high response rate of stating that there was 'nothing' that they did not like about living in their communities is quite revealing. Although residents are very aware of the problems that confront their communities (as we shall see below), these problems were not viewed as intrinsic to the community itself or that such problems that would necessarily make the community a less desirable place to live. Rather, it underscores a strong commitment to distinctive life that the respective communities provide.

Table 6.8 *What Don't You Like About Living Here*

	Tyanya			Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
Nothing	36	72	Nothing	24	48
People	4	8	People	7	14
Self Gov't	3	6	Limited Recreation	5	10
Other	6	12	No Jobs	5	10
Don't Know	1	2	Alcohol and Drugs	3	6
			Other	5	10
			Don't Know	1	2

Problems Facing Community

Along with identifying what they liked and disliked about living in Tyanya and Gift Lake, respondents were asked to identify the most important and the second most important problems facing their communities. As indicated in Table 6.9, both communities display considerable consensus in the identification of the problems which confront them. In Tyanya, two problems stood among the rest as the most important facing the community: social conditions, such as housing and electricity at twenty-eight (28) percent (electricity alone accounted for half this percentage), and the supplies of food and material goods at twenty-two (22) percent. Most residents live in wooden houses, many of which are small and some are overcrowded. None of the houses, and neither the school, nor the nursing station have running water. There are other aboriginal communities in Siberia, however, where the conditions are worse. More pressing is the question of electricity. At the time of the interviews, the diesel-electric station in the village operated only in the morning and the evening in order to conserve fuel. During the day and at night, there was no electricity in the village. (More recently, with the transition to a market economy, the village can no longer afford diesel fuel and, consequently, the village is virtually without electricity.) In Gift Lake, the two problems identified as the most important were the lack of jobs at forty-four (44) percent and alcohol and drug abuse at sixteen (16) percent. In contrast to Tyanya, housing, electricity, water and other amenities in Gift Lake are far less acute problems, although housing conditions are lower than those of the general population of Alberta. The supply of food and material provisions was also viewed as a serious problem by many residents. The most basic items, such as milk for children, were chronically in shortage, save for a few items usually those which had little use or demand.

Table 6.9 *What Is The Most Important Problem In Your Community*

	Tyanya			Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
Supply of Goods	11	22	Jobs	22	44
Soc. Conds	14	28	Alcohol/Drugs	8	16
Transportation	4	8	People	3	6
Self Gov't	4	8	Leadership	3	6
Leadership	3	6	Other	5	10
Other	6	12	None	6	12
Don't Know	3	6	Don't Know	1	2

In Gift Lake, the lack of jobs was viewed by far as the single largest problem facing the community. Among those interviewed who were of working age, only thirty (30) percent had full-time employment, and another fifteen (15) percent were employed part-time, thus, more than half did not hold jobs in the wage economy. However, as Pocklington notes in his own study, a number of qualifications must be taken into account when discussing employment issues: First, many women are primarily homemakers and do not seek jobs in the wage economy. Second, many of the men engage in seasonal work, such as fire fighting and brush cutting, and are employed only during specific times of the year. And third, many residents are working in traditional subsistence activities, such as hunting, which are not considered (like homemaking) official employment. Nevertheless, many residents would take up jobs in the wage economy if such opportunities were available.

In Gift Lake, alcohol and drug abuse is a problem. But, some residents noted that it was actually declining; moreover, incidents of impaired driving were also acknowledged to be declining as a result of the establishment of a small police detachment which is shared between Gift Lake and the neighbouring Indian reserve. By comparison, in Tyanya, alcohol abuse was actually more obvious, even to a temporary visitor, though the author has seen far worse situations in other aboriginal communities in the Russian North. Women in particular noted the problem of hunters returning home to exchange sables for vodka. But, heavy drinking is far more widespread in Russia than in Canada, and it is far more socially acceptable. In Canada, the state actively promotes moderate drinking, and sponsors a wide range of drug and alcohol abuse programmes. Thus, the identification of alcohol and drug abuse in Gift Lake and not in Tyanya should not be taken as an indication of the presence of this problem in Gift Lake, and not in Tyanya. Rather, it is a reflection of different attitudes of the dominant state and society toward this problem.

Well-Being Compared to Non-Native Communities

There is a common perception, perpetuated by the mass media, that aboriginal people feel they are treated worse than non-aboriginal people. To investigate this perception, a simple question was asked: "Do you feel that your community is treated better or worse than non-Native communities in the area?" In Tyanya, sixty-four (64) percent and, in Gift Lake, sixty-eight (68) percent of respondents felt that they were treated the same or better than non-Native communities in the area. These responses might come as a surprise when the material social conditions of Tyanya and Gift Lake are compared with those of Russian and Canadian dominant societies. But, that is the problem. Notwithstanding the problems facing contemporary aboriginal peoples, their communities are much more than simply the sum of social indicators, such as housing and employment. The close sense of community and the proximity to extended family are highly valued and often overlooked by non-Native observers. However, 'concrete' examples were also offered by respondents. In Gift Lake, for instance, some residents explained that their taxes were only ten dollars a year and that in larger urban centres taxes were much higher. In Tyanya, some residents explained that crime was much higher in the larger urban centres and that people could leave their doors unlocked in the village. But in both Tyanya and Gift Lake, there was a strong conviction that no matter what shortcomings and problems might exist in each community, life was undoubtedly better compared to non-Native communities. One writer noted in regards to Indian reserves:

> Reserves are more than just places to be born and to die. As Harold Cardinal once said; 'The reserves are our cathedrals.' If they are seen as sacred communities by Indians now, someday they may be treasured by all Canadians as part of our national heritage and regarded as special and privileged places in which to live.[17]

Thus, while the acute social problems that face many aboriginal communities should not be ignored and must be addressed, these problems do not define aboriginal communities. Contemporary aboriginal peoples are not merely 'cultures of poverty' or 'cultures of dependence'. To be sure, poverty and dependence do exist, but so, too, do family relations, opportunities to pursue traditional economic activities, tranquility, and a strong sense of home.

Community Politics

The imposition of forms of local government on the Evenk of Tyanya and the Metis of Gift Lake radically transformed indigenous political organization, following a familiar pattern of aboriginal-state relations repeated throughout Russia and Canada. Traditionally, the Evenk and Metis lived in groups of nomadic, extended families in which membership was fluid and whereby collective decisions were achieved by consensus. Contemporary political life is marked by a single, spatially-fixed community, possessing a relatively permanent membership and by decision-making processes which are authoritative and binding for community members. Therefore, any study of self-government at the community level must include an inquiry of the impact of institutions of local government for aboriginal political life. This study asked 'ordinary' community members their views about political life in Tyanya and Gift Lake, focusing on questions regarding political participation, political efficacy, and political distribution.

Political Participation

Mass political participation in both Gift Lake and Tyanya means primarily participating in the election of council members and attending general council meetings. Community members were first asked whether or not they regularly participated in the elections of local council. In both Tyanya and Gift Lake, eighty-eight (88) percent of those interviewed reported that they usually take part in the elections of local council. As is known from electoral studies the percentage of those who claim to vote regularly is invariably higher than percentage of those who actually vote. Nevertheless, these rates of espoused election participation are far greater than those at the local level in the dominant society and where actual participation rates can run below twenty-percent. Conversely, in the dominant society, the highest rates of electoral participation are typically at the national level. Why does this difference exist? For aboriginal peoples the local community is the fundamental unit of political life. For the dominant society it is the nation. Aboriginal communities are not just other local population centres within the dominant state and society, but rather, they are political communities distinct from the dominant society.

Community members were also asked about what characteristics they looked for in candidates when they voted. In Tyanya, eight people did not respond to this question. However, someone who was a hard worker was the choice of twenty-four (24) percent of respondents, followed by someone who was honest, twenty-two (22) percent, or by someone with principles, sixteen (16) percent. In Gift Lake, only three people did not answer this question. The three most popular answers were someone who will help the people of the community, thirty-six (36) percent, someone who is honest and trust worthy, thirty-two (32) percent, and someone who is fair, twelve (12) percent. Community members were then asked how they thought other people voted. In Tyanya, over a third of those interviewed offered no responses. Twelve (12) percent thought others voted for someone who would do favours for them, and eight (8) percent, each, thought others voted for someone who was either a hard worker or who was honest. In Gift Lake, the responses were revealing. Only five people gave no response. Nearly one third, thirty-two (32) precent, thought others voted for relatives, twenty-six (26) percent thought for peoples who would do special favours, and eight (8) percent, each, thought that others voted for someone who would help the people or who was honest.

Table 6.10 *How Often Do You Attend General Meetings*

	Tyanya		Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Never	11	22	13	26
Rarely	21	42	11	22
Sometimes	7	14	13	26
Often	11	22	13	26

In addition to electoral participation, respondents also were asked how regularly they attended the general meetings of the local council (Table 6.10). In Gift Lake, just over half, fifty-two (52) percent, responded that they attended either sometimes or often. In Tyanya, just over a third, thirty-six (36) percent, stated that they attended either sometimes or often. While it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the differences between Gift Lake and Tyanya, part of the explanation for the difference may lie in the democratic political culture of Canada compared with an authoritarian political culture in Russia. Active, meaningful participation in political life at the grass roots level has not existed in Russia for at least seventy years, and before that only for a brief period. Thus, just because the authoritarian Soviet state has collapsed does not mean all of its norms have gone with it. However, compared to the dominant society, these participation rates still reflect a high commitment to the political life of the community.

Political Efficacy

Whether community members feel they have any influence over decision making in their communities is an important question as aboriginal peoples move closer to acquiring greater self-determination. Boldt cautions that self-government may mean political autonomy for the few, not the many. In order to assess to what degree community members felt they had any political efficacy, questions were asked about the respondents' perceptions of the performance and responsiveness of local council. Residents were asked what they thought council did especially well. In Tyanya, residents generally did not have a favourable view of the performance of the local council. Although twenty-six (26) percent gave no response to the question, nearly half or forty-eight (48) percent stated that the council did nothing well. In fact, only six (6) percent could find anything that the council did well. In Gift Lake, the council fared somewhat better. Just over half of respondents could identify something council did well, with housing at twenty-four (24) percent and helping with social needs at twenty--two (22) percent as the leading answers. However, eighteen (18) percent stated that council did nothing well, and another eight (8) percent stated that council were especially helpful only to themselves or their relatives.

Respondents were then asked what the council does not do very well. In Tyanya, those who gave no response rose to forty (40) percent. The largest single response was council did everything poorly at sixteen (16) percent, followed by failing to address the social conditions of the community at twelve (12) percent and not listening to people at six (6) percent. In Gift Lake, those who gave no response actually fell to ten (10) percent. The most popular answers to the question of what council does not do well were favouritism to relatives at eighteen (18) percent, jobs at fourteen (14) percent, housing at ten (10) percent, and listening to people at eight (8) percent.

Table 6.11 *How Does Council Treat Your Problems*

	Tyanya		Gift Lake	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
With Attention	10	20	13	26
With Indifference	24	48	14	28
Without Attention	12	24	19	38
No Response	4	8	4	8

Finally, those interviewed were asked how council treated their problems. Their responses are displayed in Table 6.11. In Tyanya, one-fifth felt that council treated their problems with attention and, in Gift Lake, the corresponding share was one-quarter. The higher response rate in Gift Lake is not surprising given the comparative views of residents in regards to the performance of their respective councils. It is interesting to note, however, that nearly half of those interviewed in Tyanya felt that the council treated their problems with indifference as opposed to completely ignoring them, whereas in Gift Lake, almost forty percent felt that council completely ignored their problems.

Social Structure and Political Distribution

One of the most important consequences of the institutionalization of structures of local government has been the development of favouritism. Traditionally, decision making within Evenk and Metis communities was neither authoritative, nor binding. To the extent that things, such as meat for food or hides for clothing, were distributed within the community, they were allocated on the basis of reciprocity and often within kin groups. Should irreconcilable differences arise between or within family groups, the dissenting faction could easily split off from the larger group. With the imposition of the institution of government, this option is no longer available. Families cannot leave one community and simply join another, or strike out on their own. Further, housing or educational programs, for example, are chronically scarce. Now, the distribution of these resources is accomplished authoritatively. However, kinship remains the powerful tie that binds, and those in power are expected to allocate values along kin lines. Many families feel that the distribution of housing, jobs, and so on, is not done fairly, as such a system favours the larger dominant families in the community. Thus, whereas in the past indigenous communities were largely egalitarian, Boldt argues that state policies are "not only giving rise to a Indian ruling class, they are also giving rise to a socio-economic elite class.[18] Boldt is not alone in this observation. Marie Smallface Marule argues that one of the dangers of the current system of government imposed upon aboriginal communities is that "Indian society will evolve into a two-class system of 'haves' and 'have nots'."[19] And, in her path breaking book, *A Poison Stronger Than Love*, Shkilnyk notes the Indian bureaucracies that have developed in aboriginal communities, such as Grassy Narrows, have tended to benefit those with relatives holding office in the local government.

> Indian bureaucrats decided who should get work, for how long, and at what rate of pay; they decided who should get welfare and who needed a new house. Decisions on these most basic human needs became subject to political maneuvering. Those families not represented in the band administration by a close relative found themselves at a disadvantage in this competitive environment.[20]

However, Pocklington accurately points out that favouritism is not limited to aboriginal communities. He offers patronage in Canadian public life as one notable example, as well as the example of "the son-in-law who 'works his way up from the top'" in the private sector.[21] Russian politics during the Soviet period were also hardly immune from patron-client relations and the attendant favouritism. But in aboriginal communities, favouritism is more conspicuous for several reasons: first, the distribution of goods and opportunities, such as housing and jobs, are almost invariably overt political decisions in contrast to the dominant society; second, resources are often more scarce than in the dominant society, which makes winning and losing all the more acute; third, the small, face-to-face nature of most aboriginal communities means that decision making is unavoidably personalized, as opposed to the impersonal order of the much larger, dominant society where favouritism appears more distant and abstract. In any case, favouritism is an issue that cannot be avoided if the implications of self-government are to be discussed in a candid and honest manner.

Because of the sensitive nature of the issue of favouritism, questions regarding social structure and political distribution were put the following way: In Tyanya respondents were asked two questions: First, "In Canada, it is often said that if you need work or a new house, it is easier to receive these if you are a relative of a member on council. In your village is it the same?" Second, "In Canada, it is often said that if you need a job or a new house, it is easier to receive these if you are a member of one of the influential families. In your village is it the same?" (Table 6.12) The same questions were asked in Gift Lake, except that Russia was substituted for Canada in the wording of the question. The point of asking the questions this way was to not leave the impression that an accusatory finger was being pointed at any particular community. Another important point needs to be stressed in this discussion: perceptions that favouritism exists are not in themselves evidence that it does.

In Gift Lake, eighty (84) percent and, in Tyanya, sixty (60) percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it was easier receive things such as housing or a job if a person was related to a member of council. Nearly the same number of respondents, eighty-four (84) percent in Gift Lake and fifty-six (56) percent in Tyanya agreed or strongly agreed that it was easier to receive these values is a person was a member of an influential family.

There are several interesting findings connected with these responses. First, many respondents failed to see the difference between the two questions. It was unfathomable that an influential or leading family would not have members on council. It was explained many times to the author, as an outsider, during the course of the interviews that in aboriginal communities people voted for their relatives--those with the most relatives, in other words, the largest families, won. In the respondents' eyes, therefore, only those who belonged to an influential or leading family could usually be members of council. In other words, the two questions were just two sides of the same coin. Second, notwithstanding the different histories of electing councilors through competitive elections in Gift Lake or through perfunctory elections in Tyanya, the underlying kinship structure was viewed as pivotal in the political distribution of resources within each community. Third, the widespread sentiment that kinship played a central role in community political life cut across family affiliations, both influential and less influential families. It is not surprising that families who feel disadvantaged would agree that favouritism exists; however, members of influential families often also affirmed this view.

Table 6.12 *In Russia/Canada, They Often Say That If You Need Work Or A New House, It Is Easier To Get These If You Are A Relative Of A Member Of Council. Is It The Same In Your Community?*

	Tyanya		Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	28	31	62
Agree	16	32	11	22
Disagree	9	18	5	10
Strongly Disagree	9	18	0	0
No Response	2	4	3	6

In Russia/Canada, They Often Say That If You Need Work Or A New House, It Is Easier To Get These If You Are A Member Of An Influential Family. Is It The Same In Your Community?

	Tyanya		Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	28	27	54
Agree	14	28	15	30
Disagree	10	20	5	10
Strongly Disagree	10	20	0	0
No Response	2	4	3	6

Self-Government

There is a pervasive perception that aboriginal self-government is desired by the vast majority of aboriginal people. There is also a commonly held view that aboriginal self-government is desired primarily to improve the difficult social conditions that exist in many aboriginal communities. Is this the case? Community members in Tyanya and Gift Lake were asked two questions regarding the issue of self-government. First, "Would your community be better off, if it were freer to make its own decisions without government interference?" Second, "How important is self-government for preserving the way of life of the Evenk/Metis?" If we pair the responses of these questions with those of two other related questions, a clearer picture of the orientations toward the issue of self-government in Tyanya and Gift Lake begins to emerge.

Table 6.13 *Do You Feel That Your Community Is Treated Better Or Worse Than Non-Native Communities In The Area?*

	Tyanya Number	Percentage	Gift Lake Number	Percentage
Worse	13	26	6	12
Same or Better	32	64	34	68
Don't Know	5	20	10	20

Would Your Community Be Better Off, If It Were Freer To Make Its Own Decisions Without Government Interference?

	Tyanya Number	Percentage	Gift Lake Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	18	5	10
Agree	15	30	12	24
Disagree	10	20	20	40
Strongly Disagree	14	28	8	16
Don't Know	2	4	5	10

The first 'self-government question' is paired with "[d]o you feel that your community is treated better or worse than non-Native communities in the area?" is paired with former (Table 6.13). In Tyanya just fifty (50) percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would be better off if their community had greater political autonomy, whereas almost as many, forty-six (46) percent felt the opposite. In Gift Lake, only thirty-two (32) percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the community would be better off if it was freer to make its own decisions, and sixty (60) percent disagreed or completely disagreed. Although more people in Tyanya than in Gift Lake believed that increased political autonomy would make their community better off, in neither community was there overwhelming support for that view. A large part of this explanation can be found in how respondents feel their communities are treated compared to non-Native communities in the area: in both communities over sixty percent of respondents felt that they were treated the same or better, and only a minority felt that they were treated worse.

In fact, a number of respondents indicated that their local governments could not possibly assume responsibility for the delivery of basic services such as the supply of goods to Tyanya or road service to Gift Lake, and pointed out these services as important benefits of a certain degree of integration with the dominant state and society. Another important reason offered by a number of respondents who disagreed that their communities would be better off with increased political autonomy is favouritism. Some respondents suggested that the allocation of values, such as jobs and houses, would be done a less fair basis if the local council had greater autonomy. These respondents argued that the provincial or district government served an important function as a check on community affairs.

Table 6.14 *How Important Is It To Preserve The Way Of Life Of The Metis/Evenk?*

	Tyanya		Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very Important	41	82	40	80
Important	7	16	6	12
Not Very Important	1	2	1	2
Not At All Important	0	0	0	0
Don't Know	0	0	3	6

How Important Is Self-Government For Preserving The Way Of Life Of The Metis/Evenk?

	Tyanya		Gift Lake	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very Important	27	54	7	14
Important	14	28	19	38
Not Very Important	6	12	17	34
Not At All Important	0	0	1	2
Don't Know	13	26	6	12

The second 'self-government question' is paired with "[h]ow important is it to preserve the way of life of the Evenk/Metis?" The responses to these questions are displayed in Table 6.14. In Tyanya, eighty-two (82) percent and, in Gift Lake, fifty-two (52) percent--a majority in both communities--felt that self-government was important or very important for preserving the way of life of the Evenk and Metis, although there is an obvious difference in terms of the size of support for that view. Part of the explanation for this difference may lie in the fact that ethnopolitical issues are far more prominent in contemporary Russia and the stakes are much higher (even when the Quebec issue in Canada is considered). Another explanation may be that in 1992 there was far greater optimism about prospects that recent changes would bring in the former Soviet Union, especially in the Sakha Republic which was charting its own course of self-determination within the Russian Federation.

More important, however, than the difference between Tyanya and Gift Lake is the difference in the number of those who support self-government *within* each community when the focus changes from being 'better off' to 'preserving a way of life': support for self-government grows by thirty-two (32) percent in Tyanya and by eighteen (18) percent in Gift Lake. This difference would suggest that the struggle for aboriginal self-government has more to do with protecting the integrity of indigenous cultures than with improving the material conditions of contemporary aboriginal communities.

Conclusion

As aboriginal peoples in Russia and Canada move down the road toward greater self-determination, it is crucial for policy makers to understand not only the problems confronting aboriginal communities and the positions of aboriginal leaders, but also the views of "ordinary" community members. Understanding the relative importance attached to such things as traditional subsistence activities or indigenous languages in maintaining the fabric of everyday life of different communities is clearly important. But, so, too, are the much less discussed issues, such as favouritism. To ignore the views of "ordinary" community members is perilous. For in the end, the success or failure of self-government will be determined ultimately by how well self-government arrangements address both their aspirations and their concerns.

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[1] T. C. Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991).

[2] Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

6Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, xvi.

[7] Ibid., 187.

[8] This situation was not unique to the Evenk. Because Yakut served as the lingua franca of Eastern Siberia, most native peoples were able to communicate in Yakut. The pervasiveness of Yakut was so great, in fact, that Russian Cossacks who settled in Yakutia, not only acquired the Yakut language, but often forgot Russian in the process.

[9] Interview with Evenk elder, November 1991.

[10] Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, 196.

[11] See Igor Krupnik, *Arctic Adaptations: Native Whalers and Reindeer Herders of Northern Eurasia*, trans. and ed. Marcia Levenson (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993); Richard F. Salisbury, *A Homeland for the Cree: Regional Development in James Bay, 1971-1981* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986).

[12] Interviews with Gift Lake and Tyanya elders, 1991-1992.

[13] Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, 177.

[14] Ibid., 182.

[15] Michael Asch, *Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1988), 13-25.

[16] Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements*.

[17] Richard K. Pope, "North American Indian Nationalism and the Decline of Sacred Authenticity," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 5,no. 2 (1985), 259.

[18] Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, 124.

[19] Marie Smallface Marule, "An Indian Perspective on Canadian Politics," in *Politics: Canada*, ed. Paul W. Fox and Graham White. 7th ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1991), 19-20.

[20] Anastasia M. Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger than Love: the Destruction of an Ojibwa Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 152.

[21] Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements*, 115.

CONCLUSION
Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons

Understanding the historic roots of the struggle for aboriginal self-government is important if aboriginal and dominant political communities are to coexist successfully. The conventional view is that current efforts to secure self-government are an unbroken history of aboriginal peoples' attempts to remain self-governing. This conventional view is flawed. Aboriginal political communities today, of course, do have ties to the past. In many communities, hunting and gathering are still important activities, as are preserving languages and maintaining oral histories. But, it is also important to understand the ties which have been broken.

A central argument of this work is that aboriginal political communities in Canada and Russia have undergone a great transformation from peoples without government to peoples with government. Whereas once aboriginal peoples constituted anarchical political communities with non-fixed territories in which decisions were arrived at by consensus, today new communities possess government structures, complete with bureaucracies and precisely demarcated territorial boundaries, by which decisions are made authoritatively and are binding. Moreover, government is taken for granted as a part of everyday aboriginal life by aboriginals and non-aboriginals alike. And, despite the historical record, both aboriginals and non-aboriginals speak confidently of an "inherent" right to self-government. Self-government holds the promise of a better future for aboriginal peoples in Canada and Russia, and successful coexistence between aboriginal and dominant political communities. But, self-government also holds the potential to be less than propitious for the well-being of all. Understanding what changes have occurred in aboriginal communities, as well as those elements that have endured, and why, is clearly important as aboriginal peoples move forward on the path to greater political autonomy.

Another significant problem identified in this work is that the comparative study of aboriginal politics is limited. To the extent that comparative studies exist, there is a tendency, with few exceptions, to emphasize the broader commonalities of aboriginal-state relations. While these analyses correctly outline how policies pursued by modern states have led to considerable losses suffered by aboriginal peoples in terms of land, culture, and political autonomy, they have failed to trace the critical differences between state policies and their consequences for contemporary struggles for aboriginal self-determination. Through a comparative historical analysis, this study has advanced two main arguments. First, modern state-building, not capitalism or Western cultural imperialism, accounts for the radical transformation of aboriginal political life.

Regardless of the economic or cultural legacies of the dominant society, aboriginal peoples were able to maintain considerable political and cultural autonomy under traditional political orders. Modern states, however, sought to eliminate that autonomy and aboriginal ways of life. The second argument is that the particular form of state organization leads to different policies pursued by the state toward aboriginal peoples and, correspondingly, to different outcomes in struggles for aboriginal self-determination. Through a comparison of Canada and Russia, the study argued that federal states pursue contradictory policies of assimilation and segregation. While the state does pursue assimilationist policies through vehicles such as the residential school system, it also segregates indigenous people into separate, territorial-administrative units such as reserves. This results in the creation of aboriginal political communities, possessing territorial-administrative bases and seeking self-government. The federal organization of the state makes possible the creation of an additional, aboriginal order of government.

Using Norway and Japan as comparative contrasts, it was contended, as well, that unitary states pursue strong assimilationist policies and do not create territorial administrative units for aboriginal populations. This leads to high rates of assimilation of indigenous peoples into the social fabric of the dominant society, and results in weakly developed struggles for territorially-based, self-government. The unitary nature of the state makes the creation of an additional, aboriginal order of government extremely difficult, if not impossible. Instead, greater efforts are directed toward acquiring increased political, cultural, and economic rights within existing political structures.

This work suggests that the comparative method is an invaluable tool in providing explanations of variations both in policies pursued by states toward indigenous peoples and in the outcomes of struggles for self-determination and, thus, holds the promise of advancing our understanding of the politics of indigenous peoples beyond single country cases.

In industrialized countries, there appears to be more than one path toward aboriginal self-determination, each contingent on the particular path of modern state-building. As we look toward possible arrangement for the accommodation of the aspirations for aboriginal peoples for greater self-determination, we need to be cognizant of the divergent legacies, not just the 'critical commonalities'. Lessons from other countries may or may not have applicability to Canada. Moreover, we should also be cognizant of the very real constraints that state organization imposes on possible solutions to quests for aboriginal self-determination--as well as the opportunities. In the unitary countries of Scandinavia, territorial-based, self-government is not a likely outcome. However, in federal countries such as Canada, such arrangements are not only possible, but consistent with already existing political practice.

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